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SOME  
STUMBLING  
BLOCKS  
OF THE  
FRENCH LANGUAGE

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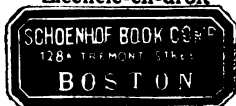
SOME  
STUMBLING  
BLOCKS

OF THE  
FRENCH LANGUAGE  
AND THE WAY TO AVOID THEM



BY  
GEORGE NESTLER TRICOCHÉ

Licencié-en-droit



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## INTRODUCTION

**T**HIS little book has been written especially for students who have already mastered the rudiments of French, but who, by lack of practice or otherwise, are still "stumbling" into the numerous pitfalls of that beautiful—and difficult—language.

It does not purport to fill the place of any of the French methods, grammars, or hand-books used at present by students. Its aim is to complete them, to a limited extent, by filling up a gap in the long series of these educational works.

The "remarks" and "advices" presented in the following pages are the output of the experience of many years in teaching French. The list of mistakes in pronunciation or construction is unique and very extensive; we are confident that it will materially help the student and facilitate somewhat the task of our fellow teachers.





## SYNOPSIS

**Part I.**—Words similar in French and in English, but with a different meaning.

**Part II.**—A list of the most common mistakes made in French by English-speaking people.

**Part III.**—French idiomatic expressions particularly difficult to understand.

**Part IV.**—English expressions particularly difficult to translate into French.

**Part V.**—Remarks about the gender of nouns.

**Part VI.**—Adjectives with a double meaning.

**Part VII.**—A few practical advices about French verbs.

**Part VIII.**—Sundry difficulties.

**Part IX.**—Mistakes in letter writing.

**Part X.**—Erroneous French quotations.

**Part XI.**—A few hints to students who have some difficulty in understanding French.

**Part XII.**—A list of very familiar expressions or words commonly used by the French in conversation or current literature.

**Part XIII.**—About some English and French affixes, etc.

**Part XIV.**—About some popular types or characters commonly alluded to in French literature or conversation.

## APPENDIX

### STUMBLING BLOCKS IN FRENCH PRONUNCIATION

Difficulty No. 1—the letter *s*.

“ No. 2—numbers.

“ No. 3—*et-est*.

“ No. 4—*plus*.

“ No. 5—*tous, tout*.

“ No. 6—the ending “*ent*.”

## A FEW PRACTICAL ADVICES ABOUT PRONUNCIATION

- I.—Diphthong *ai, ais*.
- II.—Mistakes arising from careless reading.
- III.—Miscellaneous.
- IV.—~~Mispronunciation~~ of some proper names in French.

**\* SIXTEEN EXERCISES**

## KEY TO THE EXERCISES

**\*Although these exercises do not purport to be interesting—which would be a supernatural accomplishment in a French educational work—they have been at least so construed as to have a meaning.**

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- adj.—adjective.
- f—feminine.
- fig.—figuratively.
- m.—masculine.
- med.—medical.
- milit.—military.
- plu.—plural.
- sing.—singular.
- subst.—substantive

## PART I.

WORDS SIMILAR IN FRENCH AND IN ENGLISH  
BUT WITH A DIFFERENT MEANING

**F**RENCH and English have in common a considerable number of words, but it is a widely spread error to think that the meaning of these words is always the same, or nearly the same, in both languages.

It is commonly supposed, for instance, in America, that DÉPÔT is the correct French word for a large **railway station**—while its meaning is that of "stores of materials," or "round house" for engines. The traveler from New York or London is not a little surprised, when he is in France, to learn that OFFICE means **pantry**, and CHANDELIER, **candlestick**! He puzzles very much his French friend by tendering him SES APOLOGIES instead of **ses excuses**; and he feels indignant when he is directed to the shop of a dealer in **cast off iron**, after he had asked for the address of a MAGASIN DE BRIC À BRAC. Much to his embarrassment, he is not understood or he is laughed at when he speaks of the PRÉJUDICES of the old nobility, for he should have said **préjugés** and did not mean "damages" in the least. . . . If he goes shopping, he wonders why **ready made clothing** is sold at the sign of CONFECTIONS, and **bacon** under the name of LARD. He cannot imagine why **citron** plays such an important part in French cooking . . . until he chances to learn that this fruit is a plain **lemon**. But his previous experiences will fall into insignificance if, as he is about to retire, he asks for an extra **blanket**, and sees the chambermaid, after much delay, bring him a dish of "stewed veal!"

It is against such mistakes that we expect, in the following pages, to warn the student.

## SECTION A

## WORDS WITH THE SAME SPELLING IN FRENCH AND IN ENGLISH

| English word  | Remarks                                     | Literal meaning of the word in French                  | To translate the word into French, USE: | Examples                                 |
|---------------|---|--|---|--|
| amiable       |   | amicable   | aimable                                 |  |
| audience      |   | judicial hearing, interview granted by a high official |   |  |
|               | in the meaning of an assembly of listeners. | .....  |   |  |
| averse (adj.) |   | shower (subst.)  | auditoire (m)                           |  |
| ballot        |   | bale   | contraire                               |  |
| bat           | in the meaning of animal.....               | pack saddle ,  | scrutin (m)                             |  |
|               |   | .....  | bâton (m)                               |  |
| bric à brac   |   | junk, old stores                                       | chauve souris (f)                       | un magasin de bric à brac is a junk-shop |
| bride         |   | bridle   | bibelot (m)                             |  |
| brigadier     |   | corporal (cavalry)                                     | marée                                   |  |
| brute         | in the meaning of animal.....               | brutish, stupid (man)                                  | général de brigade                      |  |
|               |   | .....  | animal (m) bête (f)                     |  |
| cabinet       |   | 1st, closet  |   |  |
|               | in the meaning of wooden case.....          | 2d, private study (of a doctor, etc.)                  |   |  |
|               | in the meaning of photograph.....           | .....  | casier (m)                              |  |
| cap           |   | cape (geography)                                       | format album (m)                        | une carte format album                   |
|               |   |  | bonnet (m)                              |  |

|             |   |                                    |                                 |   |
|-------------|---|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| case        | in the meaning of<br>jewel case.....                      | 1st, hut, cabin<br>2d, pigeon hole | écrin (m)                       |   |
|             | in the meaning of<br>glass case.....                      |                                    | vitrine (f)                     |   |
|             | in the legal meaning..                                    |                                    | cause (f)                       |   |
|             | in the medical mean-<br>ing and general mean-<br>ing..... |                                    | cas (m)                         |   |
| chat        |   | cat                                | causerie (f)                    |   |
| charge      |   | load, burden                       |                                 |   |
|             | in the meaning of cost                                    |                                    | prix (m)                        |   |
|             | in the legal meaning..                                    |                                    | accusation (f)                  |   |
| chandelier  |   | candlestick                        | lustre (m)                      |   |
| chiffon     |   | 1st, rag<br>2d, silk muslin        |                                 |   |
| citron      |   | lemon                              | cédrat (m)                      |   |
| coin        |   | corner                             | pièce de monnaie(f)             |   |
| complexion  |   | disposition, constitu-<br>tion     |                                 |   |
|             | in the meaning of<br>color of the skin.....               |                                    | teint (m)                       |   |
| confections |   | ready made clothing                | confiseries (f)                 |   |
| confidence  |   | secret, secrecy                    | confiance (f)                   | faire ses confidences: to tell<br>one's secrets |
| dejection   |   | evacuation (med.)                  | abattement<br>dé couragement(m) |   |
| dépôt       | Americanism for sta-<br>tion                              | deposit, stores of ma-<br>terials  | gare, station (f)               |   |

## WORDS WITH THE SAME SPELLING IN FRENCH AND IN ENGLISH

| English word | Remarks  | Literal meaning of the word in French                                    | To translate the word into French, USE:            | Examples   |
|--------------|--|--|--|--|
| diligence    |  | speed, stage coach   | soin (m)   |  |
| direction    |  | 1st, way<br>2d, management   |  |  |
|              | in the meaning of address.                                     | .....  | adresse (f)  |  |
|              | in the meaning of orders, etc.                                 | .....  | instructions (f pl)                                |  |
| distraction  |  | thoughtlessness  | insanité (f)                                       |  |
| event        |  | air hole   | éventement (m)                                     |  |
| fat          |  | foppish  | gras   |  |
| fee          |  | fairy  | honoraires (m pl)<br>droits (m pl)                 |  |
| figure       | speaking of people   | face   | taille, stature (f)                                |  |
| file         | in the meaning of tool<br>in the meaning of a bundle of papers | line, rank<br>.....<br>.....   | lime (f)<br>hasse (f)<br>tempête (f)<br>regard (m) | Notice that the English word<br>lime is <i>chaux</i> |
| gale         |  | itch, scab   |  |  |
| gaze         |  | gauze  |  |  |
| here         |  | un pauvre here, a miserable fellow<br>un triste here, a contemptible man |  |  |
| if           |  | yew tree   | si   |  |

| ignoble         | disgusting                                     | humble   | ignoble extraction, humble<br>naissance  |
|-----------------|--|--|--|
| labour          | in America, labor                              | travail, labeur (m)                                  |  |
| lame (adj.)     | blade (subst.)                                 | estropié   |  |
| lard            | bacon  | saindoux (m)   |  |
| large           | wide   | gros   |  |
| legs            | plural of leg                                  | jambes (pl)  | "des jambes arquées, legs de<br>la longue ascendance de pay-<br>sans déjetés par les rudes<br>travaux de la terre. . . ."<br>Paul Junka—Un vicairien<br>parisien |
| Lent (subst.)   |  |  | [crooked legs, legacy from a long<br>ancestry of peasants, distorted<br>by rough work in the fields]   |
| levee           | slow (adj.)                                    | Carême (m)   |  |
| lice (subs, pl) | collection (for letters)<br>levy               | lever [du Roi] (m)<br>réception (f)                  |  |
| lie             | lists [to enter the]<br>(in tournaments, etc.) | poux (m. pl.)  |  |
| lime            | sediment                                       | mensonge (m)   |  |
| lorgnette       | file (tool)                                    | chaux (f)  |  |
| main            | opera glass                                    | lorgnon (m)  |  |
|                 | hand   |  |  |
|                 | as an adjective. . . . .                       | principal  |  |
|                 | in the meaning of                              | conduit (m)  |  |
|                 | pipe. . . . .                                  | commandant, chef<br>de bataillon, chef<br>d'escadron |  |
| major           | in the army                                    |  |  |



## WORDS WITH THE SAME SPELLING IN FRENCH AND IN ENGLISH

| English word | Remarks                                       | Literal meaning of the word in French  | To translate the word into French, USE: | Examples                                    |
|--------------|---|--|---|---|
| manger       |   | the action of eating                   | mangeoire (f)                           |   |
| mangle       |   | mangrove                               | calandre (f)                            |   |
| mare         |   | pool                                   | jument (f)                              |   |
| mat (subst.) |   | dull, unpolished (adj.)                | natte (subst. f)                        |   |
| mince        | as a verb.....<br>as a noun.....              | thin, meager<br>.....                  | émincer<br>émincé (m)                   | pâté d'émincé: mince pie                    |
| mire         |   | sight (in fire arms)                   | boue, fange (f)                         |   |
| modiste      |   | milliner                               | couturière (f)                          |   |
| noise        |   | quarrel *                              | bruit (m)                               | * used only in the idiom:<br>chercher noise |
| nomination   | of candidates                                 | appointment                            | présentation (f)                        |   |
| notions      | in the meaning of<br>haberdashery.....        | idea, elementary<br>knowledge<br>..... | passenagerie (f)                        |   |
| office       | in the meaning of a<br>place of business..... | 1st, functions<br>2d, pantry<br>.....  | bureau (m)                              |   |
| or           |   | now, well                              | ou                                      |   |
| pan          |   | tail of a coat                         | terrine (f)                             |   |
| parents      |   | relatives                              | père et mère                            |   |
| partition    |   | score (music)                          | cloison (f)                             |   |

|              |  |                                       |                  |
|--------------|--|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| passable     | of a road                                    | tolerably good                        | practicable      |
| pathos       |  | bombast                               | pathétique       |
| petite       | of a woman                                   | short                                 | mignonne         |
| pin          |  | pine-tree                             | aiguille (f) *   |
| plain        |  | level                                 | simple, clair    |
| plate        |  | feminine form of plat:<br>flat (adj.) |                  |
|              | in the meaning of<br>earthenware.....        | .....                                 | assiette (f)     |
|              | in the meaning of<br>iron, steel plate ..... | .....                                 | plaque (f)       |
| portion      | in the meaning of<br>marriage portion        | part, ration<br>.....                 | dot (f)          |
| prejudice    |  | damage                                | préjugé (m)      |
| raisin       |  | grape                                 | raisin sec (m)   |
| rampant      |  | creeping                              | éfréné           |
| rave (to) v. |  | turnip, radish (subst.)               | divaguer (verb)  |
| rapt (adj.)  | for instance: a rapt<br>glance               | abduction (subst.)                    | ravi (adj.)      |
| rate         |  | spleen                                | prix, taux (m)   |
| regal (adj.) |  | treat (subst.)                        | royal (adj.)     |
| regard       |  | look, glance                          | égard (m)        |
| rein         |  | kidney                                | reine (f)        |
| relations    | speaking of persons                          | acquaintances                         | parents (m. pl.) |

la desertion était éfrénée, de-  
sertion was rampant

Translate however "with kind  
regards" into "mille amitiés"  
or "avec mes meilleurs souven-  
irs"

## WORDS WITH THE SAME SPELLING IN FRENCH AND IN ENGLISH

| English word    | Remarks                                 | Literal meaning of the word in French                | To translate the word into French, USE:                 | Examples |
|-----------------|---|--|---|----------|
| <b>relative</b> |   | feminine form of relatif (referring, comparative to) |   |          |
|                 | in the meaning of kinsfolk. ....        | .....  | parent (m)  |          |
| <b>relief</b>   |   | set-off  | soulagement, secours (m)                                |          |
| <b>report</b>   |   | amount brought forward                               | bruit (m)<br>rapport (m)<br>rumeur (f)                  |          |
| <b>ride</b>     |   | wrinkle  | promenade } en voiture, à course (f) } cheval           |          |
| <b>rime</b>     |   | rhyme  | givre (m)   |          |
| <b>romance</b>  |   | ballad, song   | roman (m)   |          |
| <b>rot</b>      |   | roast (meat)   | pourriture (f)  |          |
| <b>sale</b>     |   | dirty (adj.)   | vente (f)   |          |
| <b>sensible</b> |   | sensitive  | sensé   |          |
| <b>sentence</b> |   | sentence of a court                                  |   |          |
|                 | in the meaning purely grammatical. .... | .....  | phrase (f)  |          |
| <b>servant</b>  |   | gunner (artillery)                                   | servante (f)  |          |
| <b>slave</b>    |   | Slavonian  | serviteur (m)   |          |
| <b>stage</b>    |   | probation  | esclave<br>scène (f) (theater)<br>diligence (f) (coach) |          |

|                     |                     |                            |                          |  |
|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| store               |                     | shade (window)             | magasin (m)              |  |
| talon               | of a bird           | heel                       | serre (f)                |  |
| tape                |                     | slap                       | cordon (m),<br>ruban (m) |  |
| tenant              |                     | [old French] cham-<br>pion | locataire                |  |
| transporta-<br>tion |                     | removal of convicts        | tenancier (m)            |  |
| trivial             |                     | across the sea             | transport (m)            |  |
|                     |                     | vulgar                     | léger                    |  |
| van                 |                     | winnowing basket           | insignifiant             |  |
| vent                |                     | wind                       | voiture (f)              |  |
|                     | in the meaning of   |                            | passage (m)              |  |
|                     | breathing hole..... | .....                      | soupirail (m)            |  |
| verge               |                     | rod                        | bord, point (m)          |  |
| verger              |                     | orchard                    | bedeau (m)               |  |

## SECTION B

## WORDS WITH A SLIGHT DIFFERENCE IN THE SPELLING

| English word  | Remarks                                | French word   | Meaning of the French word                                    | To translate the word into French, USE: | Examples   |
|---------------|--|---------------|---|---|--|
| adjutant      |  | adjudant      | sergeant-major  | adjudant-major                          |  |
| apology       | in the meaning of excuse. . . . .      | apologie      | always a writing or a discourse to justify some one . . . . . |   |  |
| artificer     |  | artificier    | fireworks maker, artillery: bombardier                        | excuse (f)                              |  |
| ass           |  | as            | ace   | artisan (m)                             |  |
| avertissement |  | avertissement | warning   | âne (m)                                 |  |
| back          |  | bec           | ferry-boat  | réclame (f)                             |  |
| bankrupt      |  | banqueroute   | fraudulent bankruptcy   | dos (m)                                 |  |
| barrack       |  | baraque       | shed, hovel   | failli                                  | bankruptcy is faillite                                 |
| beck          |  | bec           | beak, bill  | caserne (f)                             |  |
| blanket       |  | blanquette    | stewed veal   | signe (m)                               |  |
| cabin         |  | cabine        | stateroom   | couverture (f)                          |  |
| chart         |  | charte        | charter   | cabane (f)                              |  |
| character     | in the meaning of behavior. . . . .    | caractère     | [in some meanings like in English] temper . . . . .           | carte marine (f)                        |  |
|               | in the meaning of testimonial. . . . . |               | . . . . .   | conduite (f)                            | Elle a une mauvaise conduite<br>She is a bad character |
|               |  |               | . . . . .   | recommandation (f)                      |  |

|               |               |  |                               |                           |
|---------------|---------------|--|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| chope         | chope         | glass of bier                              | côtelette (f)                 |                           |
| clerk         | clerc         | an attorney's clerk<br>a bailiff's clerk   | commis (m)                    |                           |
| co-respondent | correspondant | correspondent                              | complice (m. f.)              |                           |
| fabric        | fabrique      | factory                                    | fabrication (f)               |                           |
|               | .....         | .....                                      | tissu (m)                     |                           |
| fastidious    | fastidieux    | monotonous                                 | difficile (à satis-<br>faire) |                           |
| gay           | gai           | cheerful                                   | bon vivant                    |                           |
| glass         | glace         | ice  | verre (m)                     |                           |
| injury        | injure        | insult                                     | dommage (m)                   |                           |
| jolly         | joli          | pretty                                     | gai                           |                           |
| luxury        | luxure        | lust                                       | luxu (m)                      |                           |
| luxurious     | luxurieux     | lewd                                       | luxueux                       |                           |
| nap           | nappe         | table cloth                                | somme (m)                     |                           |
| obaisance     | obéissance    | obedience                                  | révérence (f)                 |                           |
| ore           | or            | gold                                       | mineral (m)                   | gold ore: mineral<br>d'or |
| partner       | partenaire    | partner at cards                           | associé (m)                   |                           |
| patent        | patente       | license                                    | brevêt d'invention<br>(m)     |                           |
| propriety     | propriété     | property                                   | convenance (f)                |                           |
| raffle        | raffle        | action of sweeping<br>stakes, etc.         | loterie (f)                   |                           |
| ragout        | ragoût        | meat stew. <i>Very<br/>seldom</i> : ragout | fumet (m)                     |                           |
| rent          | rente         | income                                     | loyer (m)                     |                           |

## WORDS WITH A SLIGHT DIFFERENCE IN THE SPELLING

| English word | Remarks                          | French word | Meaning of the French word | To translate the word into French, USE: | Examples |
|--------------|----------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|---|----------|
| resort       | in the meaning of recourse. .... | ressort     | spring (mechanics)         | station (d'été, etc)                    |          |
|              |                                  | .....       | .....                      | recours (m)                             |          |
|              |                                  | .....       | .....                      | ressource (f)                           |          |
| trance       |                                  | trance      | apprehension               | extase (f)                              |          |
| tart         |                                  | tarte       | pie                        | tartelette (f)                          |          |
| umbrella     |                                  | ombrelle    | sun umbrella               | parapluie (m)                           |          |
| vane         |                                  | vanne       | flood gate                 | girouette (f)                           |          |
| viands       |                                  | viande      | meat                       | comestibles (m. pl)                     |          |

## PART II.

## A LIST OF THE MOST COMMON MISTAKES

## MADE IN FRENCH BY ENGLISH-SPEAKING PEOPLE

**E**XPERIENCE has shown that for several reasons the mistakes hereafter enumerated are extremely frequent in conversation.

Every one of our examples has been supplied, not by a **single** pupil, but by a very large number of advanced students, either American or English, who all committed the same error, when coming in contact with that particular "stumbling block."

This list appears for the first time in a French educational work. If carefully and intelligently studied, it will prove of great value to the student who earnestly wishes to attain such proficiency as to be able to **speak** French **correctly**—an accomplishment, the possession of which constitutes the most important advantage to be derived from the study of the language.



## PART II.

## A LIST OF THE MOST COMMON MISTAKES MADE IN FRENCH BY ENGLISH-SPEAKING PEOPLE

| If you mean                       | Do not say                          | Say or write                         | Remarks   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| I get up early                    | Je me lève à la bonne heure         | * — de bonne heure                   | à la bonne heure means: well done; all right  |
| I went to Paris                   | j'ai allé à Paris                   | je suis allé —                       | aller is a verb of motion   |
| I do } without a carriage<br>go } | je fais } sans voiture<br>je vais } | je me passe de —                     |   |
| a cup of tea                      | une tasse à thé                     | une tasse de thé                     | tasse à thé means: tea-cup  |
| [if some one sneezes]             | à votre santé!                      | que Dieu vous bénisse!               | à votre santé! means: to your health!   |
| he is an acquaintance of mine     | c'est une de mes connaissances      | c'est une de mes connaissances       |   |
| an accommodation train            | un train d'accommodation            | un train mixte                       |   |
| if agreeable to you               | si agréable à vous                  | si cela vous est agréable            |   |
| I am agreeable                    | je suis agréable                    | je suis d'accord                     | je suis agréable means: I am nice, pleasant   |
| it is an affair of the heart      | c'est l'affaire du cœur             | c'est une affaire de cœur            | l'affaire du cœur means: the heart's business   |
| how do you like the play?         | comment aimez vous la pièce         | comment trouvez vous —               | [a very common mistake]   |
| I like him                        | je l'aime                           | je l'aime bien<br>je l'aime beaucoup | je l'aime alone is too emphatic to translate: I like him. Strange as it seems, the adverb bien (or beaucoup) lessens here the quality expressed by the verb |
| it looks like rain                | il a l'air de pluie                 | on dirait qu'il va pleuvoir          |   |

\* The dash is used here to avoid a useless repetition of words

|                              |                               |  |  |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| call for me at six o'clock   | appelez pour moi à six heures | venez me chercher                                      |  |
| to send in an application    | envoyer une application       | envoyer une demande                                    |  |
| apply to this office         | appliquez vous à cet office   | adrezsez vous à ce bureau                              | s'appliquer à means: to give one's attention to. office means: pantry (two very common mistakes) |
| come near the table          | approchez la table            | approchez-vous de la table                             | approchez la table means: bring the table nearer   |
| he is the doctor's assistant | Il est l'assistant du docteur | c'est l'aide   | un assistant is generally a witness, a bystander. c'est in that case is better than il est       |
| attendance is free           | l'attendance est libre        | le service est gratuit; [med.] les soins sont gratuits | attendance is not a French word  |
| I expect to go               | j'attends à aller             | je compte aller  | attendre is to wait for, to expect some one or something   |
| I shall attend your party    | j'attendrai votre partie      | j'assisterai à votre soirée [reception, etc.]          | partie is generally a game   |
| I will attend to it          | j'attendrai à cela            | je m'en occuperai                                      | a most frequent mistake  |
| he lives in an attic         | il demeure dans un attique    | une mansarde   | attique means from the Greek province Attic  |
| I go to the dentist          | je vais au dentiste           | chez le dentiste                                       |  |
| the girl with the blue eyes  | la fille avec les yeux bleus  | aux yeux bleus   |  |
| help me on with my coat      | assistez moi avec mon habit   | aidez moi à mettre mon habit                           | assister does not usually mean material help; avec is not used with aider                        |
| I am angry with you          | je suis en colère avec vous   | contre vous  |  |

## A LIST OF THE MOST COMMON MISTAKES MADE IN FRENCH BY ENGLISH-SPEAKING PEOPLE

| If you mean                        | Do not say                           | Say or write                                 | Remarks   |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| have you been here long?           | avez-vous été ici longtemps?         | combien y-a-t-il de temps que vous êtes ici? |   |
| I shall have a hat made...         | j'aurai faire un chapeau             | je ferai faire —                             |   |
| he is an old bachelor              | c'est un vieux bachelier             | c'est un vieux garçon                        | bachelier means always a B.A., etc.   |
| the balance of your account        | la balance de votre acompte          | le solde de votre compte                     | acompte means instalment, etc.  |
| the banks of the river             | les bancs de la rivière              | les bords —                                  |   |
| good morning!                      | bon matin!                           | bonjour!                                     |   |
| I spent the summer in the country. | j'ai dépensé l'été dans la campagne  | j'ai passé l'été à la campagne               | dans la campagne means: in the fields<br>dépenser is used for money or strength only        |
| he has no brains [figuratively]    | il n'a pas de cerveau                | il n'a pas de cervelle                       | cerveau is always taken in its literal meaning  |
| every one in his turn              | chacun dans son tour                 | chacun son tour                              |   |
| the pastor went up to the pulpit   | le pasteur est monté en chaire       | — en chaire                                  | chair means: flesh. The sentence would convey the idea that the clergyman has become fatter |
| I have not the way of getting it   | je n'ai pas le chemin de le procurer | je n'ai pas le moyen de me le procurer       | chemin means: road.   |
| how often have you been there?     | combien souvent avez-vous été là?    | combien de fois —                            | [a gross and a very common mistake]   |
| how far is it?                     | combien loin est-ce?                 | a quelle distance est-ce?                    | ditto   |

|  |                                      |  |   |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| how long did you wait?                 | combien longtemps avez-vous attendu? | combien de temps —                                 | ditto   |
| how old is your brother?               | combien vieux est votre frère?       | quel âge a votre frère?                            |   |
| the same as before                     | le même comme avant                  | le même qu' avant                                  |   |
| she is a companion to Mrs. X.          | elle est compagnon de Mme. X.        | elle est demoiselle (dame) de compagnie de Mme. X. | compagnon means: fellow-worker, fellow-traveler               |
| the peasant's cottage                  | le cottage du paysan                 | la chaumière —                                     | cottage means: a country-seat                                 |
| let it cost what it may in the morning | Idiom: coûte qui coûte dans le matin | coûte que coûte                                    |   |
| the finest in the world                | le plus beau dans le monde           | le matin, au matin                                 |   |
| I thought of you                       | j'ai pensé de vous                   | — du monde   |   |
| the prisoner was discharged            | le prisonnier a été déchargé         | — à vous   |   |
| I am in a hurry                        | je suis dans une dépêche             | le prévenu a été acquitté                          | as long as a prisoner has not been convicted, he is a prévenu |
| last Monday                            | le dernier lundi                     | je suis pressé                                     | déchargé means: unloaded                                      |
|  |                                      | lundi dernier                                      | dépêche means: dispatch, telegram                             |
| a friend of mine                       | un ami des miens                     | un de mes amis                                     | le dernier lundi means: the last Monday of a period           |
| to land                                | désambarquer                         | débarquer  | Notice that the days of the week take no capitals             |
| he has shown his devotion to me        | il m'a montré sa dévotion            | — son dévouement —                                 | dévotion is devotedness, piety                                |
| did you speak to him about me          | lui avez-vous dit de moi?            | — parlé —  | dire means: to say  |

## A LIST OF THE MOST COMMON MISTAKES MADE IN FRENCH BY ENGLISH-SPEAKING PEOPLE

| If you mean                                     | Do not say                                     | Say or write                                      | Remarks  |
|---|--|---|--|
| the carriage is before the door                 | la voiture est avant la porte                  | devant la porte                                   | avant is not: in front of                                    |
| this man is distracted by the death of his wife | cet homme est distraît par la mort de sa femme | cet homme est affolé                              | distrait means: inattentive, absent-minded                   |
| that gives me pleasure                          | cela me donne du plaisir                       | fait plaisir                                      |  |
| I asked of a passer by                          | j'ai demandé d'un passant                      | à un passant                                      |  |
| the train is due at 6:30                        | le train est dû à 6:30                         | doit arriver à 6:30                               |  |
| this cook is economical                         | cette cuisinière est économe                   | est économe                                       | économique is said of a money-saving device, not of a person |
| take my trunks up stairs, down stairs           | prenez mes malles en haut, en bas              | montez, descendez mes malles                      |  |
| I heard that                                    | j'ai entendu que . . .                         | j'ai { entendu dire que . . .<br>appris que . . . | [a most frequent mistake]                                    |
| I heard from my brother                         | j'ai entendu de mon frère                      | j'ai reçu des nouvelles de mon frère              |  |
| I heard about the accident                      | j'ai entendu de l'accident                     | j'ai entendu parler de l'accident                 |  |
| she is very enthusiastic                        | elle est très enthousiastique                  | enthousiaste                                      |  |
| I sent for the doctor                           | j'ai envoyé pour le docteur                    | j'ai envoyé chercher                              |  |
| listen to me                                    | écoutez à moi                                  | écoutez moi                                       |  |
| I was eating, sleeping, etc.                    | j'étais mangeant, dormant etc.                 | je mangeais, je dormais, etc.                     | a too common mistake, for which there is no excuse           |
| I was slumbering                                | j'étais } sommeil<br>j'avais }                 | je somnolais                                      | j'avais sommeil means: I was sleepy                          |

|   |  |                                       |  |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| I took the horses to the stables            | j'ai pris les chevaux à l'étable         | j'ai conduit les chevaux à l'écurie   | <b>prendre</b> is never used in the meaning of <b>to lead</b> , <b>to conduct</b> , etc.<br><b>étable</b> is used for cattle, not for horses |
| go and see him                              | allez et voyez le                        | allez le voir                         |  |
| this girl has some expectations             | cette fille a des expectations           | cette jeune fille a des espérances    | expectation is not French  |
| I expect to go there                        | j'expecte d'aller là                     | je compte aller —                     | expecter is not French   |
| I had a strange experience                  | j'ai eu une étrange expérience           | — aventure                            |  |
| he works for a living                       | il travaille pour une existence          | — pour vivre                          |  |
| he makes a living by . . .                  | il fait une existence en . . .           | il gagne sa vie en . . .              |  |
| he made 300,000 francs this year            | il a fait 300,000 francs cet an          | il a gagné 300,000 francs cette année |  |
| that makes me sick                          | cela me fait malade                      | cela me rend malade                   |  |
| this is not my best accomplishment          | ce n'est pas mon forte                   | ce n'est pas mon fort                 | <b>forte</b> , an Italian word, is used only as a musical term   |
| he has many bad habits                      | il a bien des fautes                     | — défauts                             | <b>faute</b> is an offense, a mistake  |
| the furnace of this house                   | le fourneau de cette maison              | le calorifère —                       | <b>fourneau</b> is: kitchen-stove  |
| he bought a set of furniture for the parlor | il a acheté une fourniture pour le salon | il a acheté un mobilier —             |  |
| this man is a fraud                         | cet homme est une fraude                 | cet homme est un imposteur            | <b>fraude</b> is never used when speaking of persons. Its usual meaning is <b>smuggling</b>  |

## A LIST OF THE MOST COMMON MISTAKES MADE IN FRENCH BY ENGLISH-SPEAKING PEOPLE

| If you mean                      | Do not say                      | Say or write                                    | Remarks   |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|
| the owner of the hotel           | le maitre d'hôtel               | — de l'hôtel                                    | maitre d'hôtel means butler, steward                  |
| the fifth of January             | le cinquième de janvier         | le cinq janvier                                 | Notice that months do not take a capital              |
| she plays indifferently          | elle joue indifféremment        | elle joue médiocrement                          | indifféremment means without attention, thoughtlessly |
| I am interested in him           | je suis intéressé à lui         | je m'intéresse à lui                            |   |
| I am anxious to go there         | je suis inquiète d'y aller      | — anxieuse d'y aller.<br>Il me tarde d'y aller. |   |
| introduce me to Miss N.          | introduisez moi à Mlle. N.      | présentez moi à Mlle. N.                        |   |
| read the items on this bill      | lisez les items sur cette note  | lisez les articles —                            |   |
| I wish to join your class        | je désire joindre votre classe  | je désire me joindre à —                        |   |
| do you play chess?               | jouez-vous des échecs           | jouez-vous aux —                                |   |
| do you play on the violin?       | jouez-vous sur le violon        | jouez vous du —                                 |   |
| I had a pleasant journey         | j'ai eu une plaisante journée   | j'ai fait un plaisant voyage                    | journée means a day's work, a whole day               |
| my uncle is justice of the peace | mon oncle est justice de paix   | — juge de paix                                  | justice de paix is the court                          |
| I shall let you know             | je vous laisserai savoir        | je vous ferai savoir                            |   |
| We shall leave town by noon      | nous laisserons la ville à midi | nous quitterons —                               |   |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| the teacher gave us a lecture                    | le maître nous a sermonné                   | lecture means: reading  |
| I met Miss N.                                    | j'ai rencontré la mademoiselle N.           |   |
| The Misses B. were there                         | les demoiselles —                           |   |
| I remained home                                  | je suis resté chez moi<br>[or: à la maison] | rester requires the auxiliary être  |
| I was at the opera yesterday; the house was full | — la salle était pleine                     |   |
| I miss my friend                                 | mon ami me manque                           | je manque mon ami means: I fail to meet my friend   |
| to walk up and down                              | — de long en large [or: faire les cent pas] |   |
| she will not marry him                           | — l'épouser                                 | marier is to give away in marriage, to perform the marriage ceremony  |
| this man is a mechanic                           | — un artisan                                | mécanique means: a piece of machinery   |
| I saw the doctor                                 | — le médecin                                | médecine means: remedy, drug  |
| I like it better                                 | — mieux                                     | mieux is the adverb; meilleur, the adjective  |
| I burned my finger                               | je me suis brûlé le doigt                   | When speaking of parts of the body: 1. reflexive verbs are generally used; 2. the possessive is not used (because the possession is expressed by the reflexive verb itself) |
| he lost his money                                | — son argent                                | money is change   |



## A LIST OF THE MOST COMMON MISTAKES MADE IN FRENCH BY ENGLISH-SPEAKING PEOPLE

| If you mean  | Do not say  | Say or write                                       | Remarks  |
|--|---|--|--|
| the morale of the army was bad                       | la morale de l'armée était mauvaise               | le moral de l'armée était mauvais                  | la morale is the morality<br>le moral is the spirits   |
| she is a musician                                    | elle est musicale                                 | — musicienne                                       |  |
| he was born at Paris                                 | il était né en Paris                              | il est né à Paris                                  | to be born is translated into <i>naitre</i> , the past of which is <i>je suis né</i><br>à is used with cities, en with countries |
| I am reading a new book by X., which brother gave me | je lis un livre neuf par X., que frère m'a donné  | — un nouveau livre par X., que mon frère m'a donné | un livre neuf means: a book never used, quite clean, etc.<br>Here un nouveau livre is a newly published book                     |
| have you worked much to-day?                         | avez vous beaucoup ouvert } aujourd'hui ouvrage } | avez vous beaucoup travaillé                       | these words are not French   |
| it is a little pamphlet on the "Trusts."             | c'est un petit pamphlet sur les "Trusts."         | — une petite brochure                              | pamphlet has always the aggressive meaning   |
| the Sunday paper                                     | le papier du dimanche                             | le journal   |  |
| the criminal was pardoned                            | le criminel a été pardonné                        | — grâcé  |  |
| it is noon by my watch                               | il est midi par ma montre                         | — à ma montre                                      |  |
| he works by the hour                                 | il travaille par l'heure                          | — à l'heure  |  |
| he sells them by the weight                          | il les vend par le poids                          | — au poids   |  |
| give me some particulars on the accident             | donnez moi des particuliers sur l'accident        | — des détails                                      | un particulier means: an individual  |

|  |  |                              |  |
|--|--|------------------------------|--|
| this store has many patrons in the wealthy classes | ce magasin a beaucoup de patrons dans les classes riches | — de clients [or pratiques]  | patron is employer (America: "boss")   |
| to pay a call                                      | payer une visite   | faire une visite             | [a common mistake]   |
| to have a pain in the head                         | avoir une peine dans la tête                             | avoir mal à la tête          | peine is generally moral suffering   |
| the performance of Hamlet                          | la performance d'Hamlet                                  | la représentation            |  |
| there were many people at the concert              | il y était beaucoup de peuple au concert                 | il y avait beaucoup de monde | Here people would mean rabble  |
| a grand piano                                      | un grand piano   | un piano à queue             | grand piano means: a big piano   |
| in the course of my pursuits                       | au cours de mes pouruites                                | — travaux                    |  |
| I am afraid I am sick                              | j'ai peur que je sois malade                             | j'ai peur d'être malade      |  |
| Marseille is a large place                         | Marseille est une large place                            | — une grande ville           | 1, large is wide.<br>2, place, in reference to cities, is used only in the expressions: place de commerce, place forte |
| he is more and more impertinent every day          | il est plus et plus impertinent chaque jour              | — de plus en plus            |  |
| I went there several times                         | j'y suis allé plusieurs temps                            | — fois                       |  |
| I would rather go myself                           | j'irais plus tôt moi même                                | — plutôt                     | plus tôt in two words means: earlier   |
| I bought a pineapple                               | j'ai acheté une pomme de pin                             | — un ananas                  | pomme de pin means: fir cone   |
| the captain of the ship was on the bridge          | le capitaine du navire était sur le pont                 | — la passerelle              | pont, in nautical terms, means: deck   |

## A LIST OF THE MOST COMMON MISTAKES MADE IN FRENCH BY ENGLISH-SPEAKING PEOPLE

| If you mean                            | Do not say                                    | Say or write                               | Remarks  |
|--|---|--|--|
| take that child to school              | portez cet enfant à l'école                   | menez —                                    | porter is to carry in the arms.  |
| send for the carriage                  | envoyez pour la voiture                       | envoyez chercher —                         |  |
| I am waiting for an opportunity        | j'attends pour une opportunité                | j'attends une occasion                     |  |
| look for your hat                      | cherchez pour votre chapeau                   | cherchez votre chapeau                     |  |
| I suffered for one hour                | j'ai souffert pour une heure                  | j'ai souffert pendant une heure            |  |
| Doctor N. has a large practice         | docteur N. a une grande pratique              | le docteur N. a une grande clientèle       | Here, pratique would mean: experience; les pratiques mean: the customs |
| I heard a good preacher in this church | j'ai entendu un bon prédicheur à cette église | — prédicateur —                            | prêcher is now obsolete in French                                      |
| I will take the chances to take a walk | je prendrai les chances                       | je courrai les risques                     |  |
| this took place in 1840                | cela a pris place en 1840                     | faire —<br>— a eu lieu [or: s'est passé] — | prendre place means: to take seats                                     |
| I am ready to go with you              | je suis prêt à aller avec vous                | je suis prêt à —                           | près means: near   |
| this meeting would not be proper       | cette rencontre ne serait pas propre          | — convenable                               | propre is: clean   |
| this teacher has many pupils           | ce maître a beaucoup de pupilles              | — d'élèves                                 | pupille is: ward, in the legal sense of the word                       |

|  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| as for me, I do not like that                  | quand à moi, je n'aime pas cela                  | quant à —   | quand is: when   |
| the moment I saw him                           | au moment que je l'ai vu                         | au moment où —                                    |  |
| this is a race horse                           | c'est un cheval de race                          | — cheval de course                                | cheval de race means: thoroughbred                     |
| my watch is right                              | ma montre a raison                               | — va bien   |  |
| he was sick, but he recovered                  | il a été malade, mais il a recouvré              | — s'est guéri                                     |  |
| give me back my gloves                         | redonnez moi mes gants                           | rendez moi —                                      |  |
| it is a good-looking man                       | c'est un homme qui regarde bien                  | c'est un bel homme                                | regarder bien means: to look attentively               |
| look at me                                     | regardez à moi                                   | regardez moi                                      |  |
| my apartment looks into the park               | <del>mon appartement</del> regarde dans le parc  | — donne sur —                                     |  |
| I met with an accident                         | j'ai rencontré un accident                       | il m'est arrivé un accident                       |  |
| rest a moment                                  | restez-vous un moment                            | reposez-vous —                                    | [one of the most frequent mistakes]                    |
| let us resume our conversation                 | résumons notre conversation                      | reprenons —                                       | résumer is to sum up                                   |
| you are laughing at me                         | vous riez à moi                                  | vous vous moquez de moi                           |  |
| enter the waiting room                         | entrez la salle d'attendre                       | entrez dans la salle d'attente                    |  |
| do you know this man?                          | savez vous cet homme?                            | connaissiez-vous cet homme?                       | connaître is the proper word for to be acquainted with |
| I am satisfied that you do not speak the truth | je suis satisfait que vous ne parlez pas le vrai | je suis convaincu que vous ne dites pas la vérité | satisfait means: pleased                               |
| by so doing, he saved 30,000 francs a year     | de cette façon il a sauvé 30,000 francs un an    | de cette façon il a gagné 30,000 francs par an    |  |

## A LIST OF THE MOST COMMON MISTAKES MADE IN FRENCH BY ENGLISH-SPEAKING PEOPLE

| If you mean                                       | Do not say   | Say or write                               | Remarks   |
|---|--|--|---|
| this child does not know how to read              | cet enfant ne sait pas comment lire                                | — ne sait pas lire                         |   |
| I have so much work that I cannot do it           | j'ai si tellement de travail, que.....                             | j'ai tant de travail, que.....             |   |
| she has singed her hair                           | elle a singé ses cheveux   | — roussi                                   | singer is: to ape   |
| he looks sober, for he has just lost at the races | il a l'air sobre, car il a juste perdu aux courses                 | il a l'air sérieux, car il vient de perdre | sobre is always: temperate, not drunk   |
| when you go out please mail this letter           | quand vous sortez, mettez cette lettre à la poste, s'il vous plaît | quand vous sortirez                        | quand requires the future tense, when the action expressed by the verb is merely accidental<br>If it is a customary action, the present is used: quand vous sortez (whenever you go out) vous laissez toujours la porte ouverte |
| If you go out, shut the front door                | si vous sortirez, fermez la porte d'entrée                         | si vous sortez, fermez                     | si never requires the future tense, except when it means whether  |
| I let the fire go out                             | j'ai laissé sortir le feu  | — éteindre                                 |   |
| I took a subscription to the "Figaro."            | j'ai pris une souscription au "Figaro."                            | — un abonnement                            | souscription is: share-list, etc.   |
| he cannot succeed in business                     | il ne peut pas succéder en affaires                                | — réussir                                  | succéder means: to succeed to, to come after [a common mistake]   |
| I am cold   | je suis froid  | j'ai froid                                 |   |

|   |   |                                 |   |
|---|---|---------------------------------|---|
| he will come on Thursday                              | il viendra sur jeudi  | il viendra jeudi                | sympathique means: congenial  |
| when I told him of my sorrow, he was very sympathetic | quand je lui ai parlé de mon chagrin, il a été très sympathique | — il m'a montré de la sympathie |   |
| I am late   | je suis tard  | je suis en retard               | tard is used only in such expressions as <i>il est tard</i> , <i>sur le tard</i> , etc. |
| my watch is late                                      | ma montre est tard  | ma montre retarde               |   |
| give me a postage stamp                               | donnez moi un timbre de poste                                   | — timbre poste                  |   |
| I like to travel in the mountains                     | j'aime à travailler dans les montagnes                          | — voyager —                     | travailler means: to work [a gross and inexcusable mistake]                             |
| an excursion train                                    | un train d'excursion  | un train de plaisir             |   |
| very much   | très beaucoup   | extrêmement                     |   |
| I have been mistaken                                  | j'ai été trompé   | je me suis trompé               | j'ai été trompé means: some one [or something] deceived me                              |
| the trouble is that.....                              | le trouble est que.....   | le malheur est que              |   |
| I had much trouble with that lawsuit                  | j'ai eu beaucoup de troubles avec ce procès                     | — de difficultés —              |   |
| What is the trouble?                                  | Quel est le trouble?  | De quoi s'agit-il?              |   |
| Do not trouble yourself                               | Ne vous troublez pas  | Ne vous gênez pas               | Ne vous troublez pas means: do not get confused, "mixed up."                            |
| This servant is well trained                          | ce domestique est bien entraîné                                 | — style —                       | entraîné is used in matters of sports   |
| Are you not in a hurry? — Yes, I am                   | n'êtes vous pas pressé? — Oui je le suis                        | — Si, je le suis                |   |

## A LIST OF THE MOST COMMON MISTAKES MADE IN FRENCH BY ENGLISH-SPEAKING PEOPLE

| If you mean                              | Do not say                                  | Say or write  | Remarks  |
|--|---|---|--|
| he is a private tutor in Mr. X.'s family | il est tuteur dans la famille de Mr. X.     | — précepteur —  | tuteur means: <b>guardian</b>                      |
| he will come in a few days               | il viendra dans un peu de jours             | — quelques jours  | un peu means: a little<br>[a very common mistake]  |
| he uses a silver knife                   | il use un couteau d'argent                  | — se sert d'un couteau —  | user is: <b>to wear out</b>                        |
| I had a good time                        | j'ai eu un bon temps                        | — du bon temps<br>this expression, although much used, is not grammatically correct; it is therefore better to say or write:<br>je me suis bien amusé |  |
| I saw him a few times                    | je l'ai vu quelques temps                   | — quelquefois   | quelque temps [singular] means: <b>for a while</b> |
| I sell it three francs a meter           | je le vends trois francs un mètre           | — le mètre  |  |
| he is worth a million                    | il vaut un million                          | il est riche d'un million   |  |
| he slammed the door with a vengeance     | il claqua la porte avec une vengeance       | — furieusement  |  |
| I learned three verses by heart          | j'ai appris trois vers par cœur             | — trois strophes —  | un vers is: a line only                            |
| I am coming for you                      | je viens pour vous                          | — vous chercher   |  |
| this infant is three weeks old           | ce petit enfant est vieux de trois semaines | — est âgé de —  |  |

|   |                                       |   |   |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| he is the villain in this play              | il est le vilain dans ce jeu pièce    | il est le traître dans cette pièce                                    | visiter is generally used when speaking of the sights of a city, etc. |
| she is visiting my sister in the country    | elle visite ma sœur à la campagne     | elle est en visite chez ma sœur —                                     |   |
| come quickly                                | venez vite                            | — vite  |   |
| I shall see him to the door                 | je le verrai à la porte               | je le reconduirai   | je le verrai à la porte would mean: I shall behold him, etc.          |
| We are going to see the sights of the place | nous allons voir les vues de la ville | — les curiosités —  |   |
| after having seen him, I said .....         | après l'avoir vu, je dis . . .        | après l'avoir vu —  |   |
| respectfully yours                          | vos respectueusement                  | je reste, avec respect, votre très dévoué (or votre humble serviteur) | See "Mistakes in Letter-Writing," page 56                             |
| will you have this box?                     | voulez-vous avoir cette boîte?        | voulez vous cette boîte?  |   |
| it is a grand sight                         | c'est une grande vue                  | c'est un magnifique spectacle   | grand here would mean: large, big                                     |



To this list of gross and unpardonable mistakes, we add the following, which may be left out by students who do not wish to make a special study of French rhetoric.

It contains some faulty expressions which are quite excusable in a foreigner, because most of them are commonly used in France, except by the very few who have mastered—and not forgotten—the deepest arcana of the grammar.

| Remarks  | Do not say or write | Say or write                          |
|--|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| If you mean an action which will continue, go on and increase      | commencer de        | commencer à                           |
| If you mean an action of limited duration                          | commencer à         | commencer de                          |
| If you mean an action of long duration                             | continuer de        | j'ai commencé d'écrire ma lettre      |
| If the duration is very limited                                    | continuer à         | continuer à                           |
| In the meaning of to dare  | défier à boire      | il continue à exercer la médecine     |
| In the meaning of to challenge                                     | défier de boire     | continuer de                          |
| In the meaning of to escape something                              | échapper de         | il continue d'écrire sa lettre        |
| In the meaning of to escape from                                   | échapper à          | défier de boire                       |
| If you use to borrow in the sense of to draw from figuratively     | emprunter à         | échapper à                            |
| If you speak of a present occupation which is of little importance | s'occuper de        | échapper à la prison                  |
|  |                     | échapper de                           |
|  |                     | échapper de prison<br>(from)          |
|  |                     | emprunter de                          |
|  |                     | il a emprunté ce passage de<br>(from) |
|  |                     | Longfellow; otherwise use à           |
|  |                     | s'occuper à                           |
|  |                     | il s'occupe à lire le journal         |

| If you mean something important and of long duration                                | of s'occuper à                          | s'occuper de  |
|---|---|---|
| If you speak of something which cannot be accomplished without a considerable delay | obliger<br>contraindre } de<br>forcer   | obliger<br>contraindre } à<br>forcer d'obliger vos sujets<br>à vous aimer                             |
| If you mean a well determined action, to be done at once                            | obliger<br>contraindre } à<br>forcer    | obliger<br>contraindre } de<br>forcer<br>je suis obligé de sortir                                     |
| If it is on a particular occasion   | oublier à                               | oublier de<br>j'ai oublié de prendre mon parapluie  |
| In the meaning of to have lost the habit of something                               | oublier de                              | oublier à<br>j'ai oublié à parler allemand depuis que je suis en Amérique<br>cela ne vous sert à rien |
| If you wish to say that a thing is temporarily useless                              | cela ne vous sert de rien               | cela ne vous sert de rien   |
| If it is permanently useless  | cela ne vous sert à rien                | cela ne vous sert à rien  |
| physical pain   | il souffre de parler                    | il souffre à parler   |
| mental pain   | il souffre à vous<br>entendre dire cela | il souffre de vous<br>entendre dire cela  |

## PART III.

## FRENCH IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

## PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND

**S**OME French idioms, which are very commonly used in conversation as well as in literature, are seldom clearly understood, if understood at all, by English-speaking people. On account of their importance in the language, the student should give them all his attention.

De quoi s'agit-il?

What is the question [the point, the subject]?

Il s'agit de.....

The thing [the point at issue] is to..... The question is.....

Donner dans.....

To indulge in.....  
[Il donne maintenant dans la théosophie.  
He indulges now in studying, etc.  
His hobby is now, etc.....]

S'en donner

To give one's self up to it. To have one's fill of it.

Etre en train de.....

To be just [reading, doing, etc.]

En vouloir à.....

[A very common expression, derived from: *vouloir du mal à*].  
To have a grudge against,  
to be set against.

[Je vous en veux.  
I have a grudge against you.  
On ne peut lui en vouloir.  
One cannot blame him.]

Faire ses embarras

To fuss.

Se faire à.....

To get used to.....

Comment se fait-il que.....

How is it that.....

{ Il ne s'en faut pas de beaucoup  
{ que [je ne vous donne]

There is little wanting for [my giving to you]—I feel very much like giving, etc.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Gêner.....   | [a very useful verb in French]<br>for dress, etc.: to be too tight.<br>[Cet habit me gêne.<br>This coat is too tight.]<br>otherwise: to be in the way.<br>to inconvenience.<br>[Vous me gênez.<br>You are in my way.<br>Ne vous gênez pas.<br>Do not put yourself to inconvenience]<br>(Compare to the German: "Gen-<br>ieren.") |
| Se jouer de  | To overcome lightly.<br>To mock at.  |
| Je tiens à cela.   | I am very tenacious of it.<br>I am much attached to it.<br>I "stick" to it.  |
| Je n'y tiens pas.  | I do not care much for it.<br>[speaking of things only]  |
| Qu'à cela ne tienne!   | Never mind that!<br>Do not let that be any objection!  |
| A quoi cela tient-il?  | What's that owing to?<br>[Tenir is a very idiomatic verb in<br>French. In that respect it ranks<br>immediately after Faire. How-<br>ever it is but little known to for-<br>eigners. Compare to the German:<br>"halten".]   |
| Travailler à façon.  | To make up people's own material.<br>Couturière à façon.   |
| Se mettre [bien, mal.]   | To dress [well, badly.]  |
| Se mettre à.....   | To set about.....  |
| Venir.....   | Notice the difference between<br>Je viens écrire, I come to write.<br>Je viens d'écrire, I have just written.<br>Si je viens à écrire, If I happen to<br>write.  |
| Vous ne sauriez être trop pru-<br>dent.                          | You could not be too prudent.  |
| Il n'aurait qu'à [nous aper-<br>cevoir, nous surprendre, etc. ]! | He might [spy us out, catch us], or<br>Suppose he. .... etc.   |
| Tantôt.  | [This adverb is often misused]<br>Alone it means By and by,<br>this afternoon.<br>[Je viendrai tantôt.<br>I shall come this afternoon.]<br>In repetition: Now. .... then.  |

Avoir beau [dire, faire.]

To be no use [saying, doing]—to do, to say in vain.

Faire l'effet de.....

To look like.....

J'ai acheté pour un franc de pommes.

I bought one franc worth of apples.

Je me soucie peu de.....

I do not care much for.....

I do not like much to.....

Qu'est-ce que cela me fait?

What is that to me?

A qui mieux mieux.

Striving with each other.

[Ils mangent à qui mieux mieux.  
They vie with each other in eating.]

Je ferai de mon mieux.

I shall do my best.

A la queue leu leu\*

In single file.

Faites en autant!

Do the same!

Si cela ne vous gêne pas trop.

If it is not too much trouble.

Le premier Paris du "Temps."

The Times' editorial.

Au fur et à mesure.‡

In proportion as.....

\* leu, old French for loup (wolf), "like wolves, one behind the tail of the other."

‡ fur, from the latin forum, market, then rate, price. Used only in this idiomatic expression.

| This expression                           | Does not mean                                   | It means  |
|---|---|---|
| Battre les cartes                         | to strike the cards                             | to shuffle the cards                                      |
| Cinq francs pièce                         | a five francs piece                             | five francs a piece                                       |
| Se faire du mauvais sang                  | to suffer from blood poisoning                  | to fret about   |
| Faire face à quelqu'un                    | to make "faces" to some one                     | to face some one  |
| Faire foin de . . . .                     | to make hay out of. . . . *                     | to despise something                                      |
| Faire queue                               | to make a tail                                  | { to stand one behind another<br>} to wait for one's turn |
| Faire la vie                              | to make a living                                | to lead a fast life                                       |
| Un homme de peine                         | a man who has troubles                          | a porter  |
| J'ai envie de                             | I am envious of                                 | { I have a mind to<br>} I want                            |
| Un remue ménage                           | a removal (moving house)                        | a domestic disturbance                                    |
| Recevoir un pot de vin                    | to receive a pitcher of wine                    | to receive a bribe  |
| Un pied à terre                           | a foot on the ground                            | { a little place to stop at<br>} a "little crib,"         |
| La pleine mer                             | the full sea                                    | the open sea  |
| Se tenir bien à table                     | to hold fast at the table                       | to behave well at table                                   |
| Vous tomberez ainsi dans la rue du Marché | thus you will fall Market Street                | this will lead you to Market Street                       |
| J'ai peine à croire                       | it hurts my feelings to believe                 | I can hardly believe                                      |
| Un chevalier d'industrie                  | a member of the society of the Knights of Labor | a "light fingered gentleman"                              |
| Avoir le mal du pays                      | to have a local disease                         | to be home sick   |
| Se trouver mal                            | to think ill of one self                        | to faint  |
| Etre dans tous ses états                  | to be in one's estates                          | to be quite upset   |

\* foin, here, means "akunk" in the dialect of Berry, in Central France.

## REMARK

To get. The translation of this verb into French often leads to serious mistakes.

I.—To get must not be indiscriminately translated by *procurer* or *se procurer*. The latter has a meaning of extensiveness which does not always exist in "to get." For instance,

"In what store did you get this hat?"

could not be rendered accurately by:

"Dans quel magasin vous êtes vous procuré ce chapeau?"  
which means:

"In what store and by which devices did you succeed in getting this hat?"

All depends, as a rule, upon the meaning attached to the verb in each particular case.

## EXAMPLES

I cannot get my key out of the lock.

Je ne peux pas retirer ma clé de la serrure.

I cannot get this book, for the shelf is too high for me.

Je ne peux pas prendre ce livre, . . . etc.

II.—To get followed by an adjective or a past participle can generally be rendered by a REFLECTIVE VERB in French.

## EXAMPLES

to get rich: s'enrichir.

to get drunk: s'enivrer.

to get married: se marier.

to get lost: se perdre.

If no reflective verb is available use: *devenir*.

|                               |                    |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Example: <i>devenir vieux</i> | } to get old, etc. |
| " <i> paresseux</i>           |                    |
| " <i> grognon</i>             |                    |

## PART V.

## REMARKS

## ABOUT THE GENDER OF NOUNS

I.—BEWARE OF the so-called Rules on the gender of French nouns. They are mostly misleading and unpractical.

II.—Above all do NOT rely upon that ancient twaddle which has spread everywhere—except in France—the idea that nouns ending in “e” mute are feminine. Hundreds of such nouns are masculine, including many in very common use. Exceptions to this so-called rule are so many indeed that we never found yet a student or a teacher able to give them all out without referring to his grammar.

The gender of most nouns can only be learned by practice and usage.

III.—Many nouns have a DOUBLE GENDER in French. As their meaning changes with the gender, it is advisable for the student to become conversant with the following list, which includes only nouns in common use.

Do not say:

|                               |     |                             |
|-------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------|
| un aide [an assistant]        | for | une aide [aid]              |
| le claque [opera-hat]         | “   | la claque [slap]            |
| le coche [coach]              | “   | la coche [notch]            |
| le couple [husband and wife]  | “   | une couple [two of a kind]  |
| le crêpe [crape]              | “   | la crêpe [pancake]          |
| le critique [a critic]        | “   | la critique [criticism]     |
| le finale [finale (music)]    | “   | la finale [ending (word)]   |
| le foudre [wine vat]          | “   | la foudre [thunderbolt]     |
| le garde [keeper]             | “   | la garde [military watch]   |
| le guide [guide]              | “   | la guide [rein]             |
| le livre [book]               | “   | la livre [pound]            |
| le manche [handle]            | “   | la manche [sleeve]          |
| le manœuvre [workman]         | “   | la manœuvre [maneuver]      |
| le mode [mood]                | “   | la mode [fashion]           |
| le moule [mould]              | “   | la moule [mussel]           |
| le mousse [cabin-boy]         | “   | la mousse [froth]           |
| le pendule [pendulum]         | “   | la pendule [timepiece]      |
| le pique [spade]              | “   | la pique [pike]             |
| le poêle [stove]              | “   | la poêle [frying pan]       |
| le poste [military post]      | “   | la poste [post-office]      |
| le pupille [ward]             | “   | la pupille [pupil (of eye)] |
| le solde [balance of account] | “   | la solde [military pay]     |
| le somme [slumber]            | “   | la somme [sum]              |
| le tour [turn]                | “   | la tour [tower]             |
| le vase [vase]                | “   | la vase [slime]             |
| le voile [veil]               | “   | la voile [sail]             |



## PART VI.

## ADJECTIVES WITH A DOUBLE MEANING

**S**OME adjectives in French have a different meaning, according as they are placed **before** or **after** the noun. This is a fact generally known to students. It is nevertheless the cause of a great many mistakes, for the very simple rule which governs the matter is not exposed clearly in most grammars. Errors will be nearly always avoided by keeping in mind that usually these adjectives, when taken in their literal sense FOLLOW, and when taken figuratively PRECEDE the substantive.

## ADJECTIVES WITH A DOUBLE MEANING

| Adjectives | Literal S. nse         | Meaning                      | Figurative Sense    | Meaning                      |
|------------|------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Beau       | une soeur belle        | a beautiful sister           | une belle soeur     | a sister in law              |
| Bon        | un homme bon           | a kind man                   | un bonhomme         | a simpleton                  |
| Brave      | un homme brave         | a brave man                  | un brave homme      | an honest man                |
| Certain    | un garçon brave        | a brave boy                  | un brave garçon     | a good fellow                |
| Cher       | une perte certaine     | a sure loss                  | une certaine perte  | a particular loss            |
| Commun     | un livre cher          | an expensive book            | mon cher livre      | my dear old book             |
|            | une volx commune       | an ordinary voice            | d'une commune voix  | unanimously                  |
| Dernier    | l'année dernière       | last year                    | la dernière année   | the last year (of a period)  |
| Fameux     | un soldat fameux       | a celebrated soldier         | un fameux soldat    | an excellent soldier         |
| Faux       | il a l'air faux        | he looks deceitful           | il a un faux air de | he resembles slightly.       |
|            | un jour faux           | [painting] mistaken light    | faux jour           | unfavorable light            |
| Fier       | porte fausse           | sham door                    | fausse porte        | secret door                  |
|            | un imbécile fier       | a silly and proud man        | un fier imbécile    | a thoroughly silly fellow    |
| Fort       | un négociant très fort | a very stout merchant        | un fort négociant   | a big dealer                 |
|            | une place forte        | a fortified city             | une forte place     | an important business center |
| Franc      | un goujat franc        | a. blackguard who is sincere | un franc goujat     | a regular blackguard         |
| Galant     | un homme galant        | a ladies' man                | un galant homme     | a gentleman                  |
| Gentil     | un homme gentil        | a nice fellow                | un gentilhomme      | a nobleman                   |
| Grand      | un homme grand         | a tall man                   | un grand homme      | a great man                  |
| Haut       | une mer haute          | a high sea                   | la haute mer        | in the offing (at sea)       |
| Honnête*   | gens honnêtes          | polite people                | honnêtes gens       | honorable people             |

\* Honnête is somewhat an exception to our rule. It is very seldom used with the meaning of "polite."

## ADJECTIVES WITH A DOUBLE MEANING

| Adjectives      | Literal Sense        | Meaning                 | Figurative Sense        | Meaning                                 |
|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Maigre</b>   | repas maigre         | meal without meat       | maigre repas            | a poor meal                             |
| <b>Mauvais</b>  | air mauvais          | vicious look            | mauvais air             | vulgar appearance                       |
| <b>Méchant</b>  | des vers méchants    | ill-natured poem        | de mauvais vers         | a poor poem                             |
| <b>Même</b>     | la douceur même      | sweetness itself        | la même douceur         | the same sweetness                      |
| <b>Mortel</b>   | la vie mortelle      | the mortal life         | deux mortelles journées | two very tedious days                   |
| <b>Mûr</b>      | une pomme mûre       | a ripe apple            | mûre délibération       | mature resolution                       |
| <b>Nouveau</b>  | un livre nouveau     | a new book              | un nouveau livre        | { another book<br>one more book         |
| <b>Pauvre</b>   | un musicien pauvre   | a penniless musician    | un pauvre musicien      | a musician without talent               |
| <b>Plaisant</b> | un homme plaisant    | a pleasing man          | un plaisant animal      | a contemptible churl                    |
| <b>Profond</b>  | un fossé profond     | a deep ditch            | un profond respect      | a deep respect                          |
| <b>Propre</b>   | une serviette propre | a clean napkin          | ma propre serviette     | my own napkin                           |
| <b>Pur</b>      | du vin pur           | pure wine               | pure vanité             | mere vanity                             |
| <b>Sage</b>     | C'est une femme sage | she is a wise woman     | C'est une sage-femme    | she is a mid-wife                       |
| <b>Seul</b>     | une femme seule      | an unaccompanied woman  | une seule femme         | only one woman                          |
| <b>Simple</b>   | un soldat simple     | a simple minded soldier | un simple soldat        | a private                               |
| <b>Tendre</b>   | viande tendre        | tender meat             | tendre amitié           | sweet friendship                        |
| <b>Triste</b>   | un poète triste      | a lachrymose poet       | un triste poète         | an indifferent poet                     |
| <b>Unique</b>   | un tableau unique    | an incomparable picture | un unique tableau       | a single picture                        |
| <b>Vrai</b>     | histoire vraie       | true story              | une vraie histoire      | a false tale, a yarn without foundation |

## PART VII.

## A FEW PRACTICAL ADVICES

## ABOUT FRENCH VERBS

I.—Many students render **without distinction** the English **past tense** by the French **imparfait**. This is a **GROSS MISTAKE**.

The usual meaning of the **imparfait**—**Je donnais**, for instance—is:

I was [giving] or I used [to give]

II.—Translate, as a rule, the English past by the French **passé indéfini**

I ate

J'ai mangé

III.—Do NOT LOAD YOUR MEMORY with such "ornamental" tenses as the **passé antérieur**, the **second form of the conditional anterior** [**J'eus donné, j'eusse donné**] and even the **plus que parfait du subjonctif** [**que j'eusse donné**].

You will have, indeed, very little use for the latter; as for the two other ones, a foreigner can do without them altogether.

[Compare to the future of the subjunctive in Spanish.]

IV.—When you first study verbs, you MAY OMIT the **prétérit** [or **passé défini**] which nowadays is little used in conversation. It is, in fact, a **narrative tense** which you will anyway learn progressively by reading French. Of course you should, later on, make a special study of it, when you are far advanced enough to tell long stories or write at length on a given topic. To study it too soon would be likely to lead you to a misuse of this tense.

It has been the mistake of many a teacher to ignore this ancient and very truthful French saying: **Qui trop embrasse, mal étirent!**

V.—Do not indulge in the very wrong habit of using **LAISSER** when you translate such expressions as

let us go.

let him eat.

let them enter.

They belong to the French **imperatif**

allons!

qu'il mange!

qu'ils entrent.

VI.—Another very common mistake, for which some old-fashioned grammars are answerable, is to translate without distinction **may** by the **subjonctif présent** and **might** by the **imparfait du subjonctif**.

The rules governing the French subjunctive are entirely different from those regulating the use of "may" and "might." The latter are, in fact, often rendered in French by *pouvoir*

I think that he may not arrive in time.

*Je pense qu'il peut ne pas arriver à temps.*

But in:

*Je tremble que vous n'arriviez pas à temps.*

*I tremble lest you may not arrive in time.*

the subjunctive is used, not because of "may," but because verbs of fear, in French, govern this mood.

VII.—Remember that *être* is NEVER used in French as an auxiliary with the present participle, like in English.

Therefore, do not say

*Je suis lisant* for I am reading, but *Je lis.*

*J'étais lisant* for I was reading, but *Je lisais.*

This also is a very common error.

VIII.—Do not try to introduce the *imparfait du subjonctif* in your sentences if there is any other construction available. It is an awkward and ill-sounding tense which French speaking people always do their best to avoid. Indeed, some classical writers, Voltaire for instance, preferred to err grammatically than to mar their works with such disagreeable expressions as *mangeassions*, *appartinssiez*, *agenouillassent*, and *persiflassiez* ! \*

IX.—It must be borne in mind that, as a rule, French VERBS OF MOTION require the auxiliary *ETRE* (and not *avoir*).

Therefore

Do not say

*J'ai allé*

*J'ai sorti*

*J'ai parti*

*J'ai monté*

*J'ai descendu*

*J'avais tombé*

*J'avais venu*

*J'avais revenu*

*J'aurais devenu*

*J'aurais entré*

*Il a né*

*Il a mort*

But say

*Je suis allé*

*Je suis sorti*

*Je suis parti*

*Je suis monté*

*Je suis descendu*

*J'étais tombé*

*J'étais venu*

*J'étais revenu*

*Je serais devenu*

*Je serais entré*

*Il est né*

*Il est mort*

\* In many instances the subjunctive [present or imperfect] can be avoided. For instance, to use it in translating sentences like this:

I do not think I shall go home.

Did you believe you were sick ?

would be a useless complication.

Say: *Je ne pense pas aller à la maison.*

*Croyiez vous être malade ?*

Both verbs have the same subject.

A great many students, however advanced they may be in French, make this mistake, the most common in French verbs and the easiest, perhaps, to avoid. This must be partly imputed to the lack of clearness of most grammars on that subject.

**Remark.**—There are exceptions to the above rule (for instance, *courir*, to run), but they apply to verbs of motion which are not so extensively used as those requiring the auxiliary *être*.

## PART VIII.

## SUNDRY DIFFICULTIES

## I.—Campagne

(a) In time of war, the army is **en campagne**, and not **à la campagne** [in the country for an outing].

(b) In the Summer you live **à la campagne**, and not **dans la campagne** [in the fields].

(c) Do not mistake **compagne** [companion] for **campagne**.

## II.—Croire.

(a) **Vous croyez quelqu'un**, but **Vous croyez à une nouvelle** [without preposition: full belief; with **à**: simple adhesion].

(b) **Vous croyez en Dieu** [with **en**: absolute confidence].

## III.—Convenir

(a) The price suits your father. **Le prix convient à votre père**.

(b) *But*: you agree to meet in the park. **Vous convenez de vous rencontrer au parc**.

## IV.—Fort, bien, beaucoup

It is a mistake to think that these three words can be used indifferently.

(a) **Bien** is without question stronger than **beaucoup**.

**Je le désire BEAUCOUP.** I wish it much.

**Je le désire BIEN.** I wish it very much.

(b) **Fort** is sometimes stronger than **bien**.

**Je le désire FORT.** I do wish it.

(c) Notice the difference between:

**fort bien**: very good! all right!

**bien fort**: very strongly.

## V.—Penser

It is a common mistake to translate **to think of** into **penser de** in the meaning of **to have in one's thoughts**. Use: **penser à**.

**Penser de** means: **to have an opinion of**.

**Pensez à moi**: **think of me**.

**Que pensez vous de moi**: **what do you think of me?**

VI.—*Pas mal, pas mauvais*

These expressions are often misunderstood by foreigners. They do not mean: not so very bad [or badly], but not at all badly, not at all bad.

*J'en ai pas mal* means: I have quite a number of them.

VII.—*Puisque, depuis*

Few students use these words correctly. Both, it is true, can be translated by *since*, but there are two "*since*" in English.

*Since* I saw you, I have been sick.

*DEPUIS* que je vous ai vu. . . . .

*Since* you cannot do otherwise.

*PUISQUE* vous ne pouvez pas. . . . .

VIII.—*N'est-ce pas*

Remember that this is the only way to translate into French such expressions as:

do you? does he? do you not? did they? and so forth; are you? were they? and so forth.

NOTICE however that you cannot use it when *do*, *does*, *are*, etc., have not the same subject as the verb for which they stand.

Example: I wish to go there; do you not?

*Je désire y aller; et vous?*

IX.—*Point, pas*

Students are often wondering what is the difference between these words.

Bear in mind that *point* is STRONGER than *pas*.

Pierre: *Je ne veux pas.*

Jean: *Je vous en prie. . . . .*

Pierre: *Je ne veux POINT, vous dis-je!*

X.—*Prepositions*

It has been said, with good reason, that no part of the French syntax is more difficult for a foreigner to master than the prepositions.

The rules laid out on that subject by the different grammars or handbooks are, of necessity, vague, unreliable and therefore of little value.

Against this kind of stumbling blocks we remain powerless, for a very long practice only can enable students to use the right preposition at the right place.

Here are, however, a few remarks from which you may derive some benefit.



I.—*De* is considerably more used than *à*. If you are in doubt, use *de* after nouns, adjectives and verbs; you will thus lessen the danger of making a mistake.

II.—Try to master the following list of verbs which are in constant use and require two prepositions (*à* with a noun; *de* with an infinitive).

|            |               |
|------------|---------------|
| Conseiller | à.....de..... |
| dire       | à.....de..... |
| demander   | à.....de..... |
| défendre   | à.....de..... |
| ordonner   | à.....de..... |
| persuader  | à.....de..... |
| promettre  | à.....de..... |
| proposer   | à.....de..... |
| permettre  | à.....de..... |
| rappeler   | à.....de..... |
| refuser    | à.....de..... |
| reprocher  | à.....de..... |
| répondre   | à.....de..... |
| souhaiter  | à.....de..... |

Rely upon practice for the rest and unless you enjoy an extraordinary memory, do not endeavor to learn by heart the lists given by grammars and handbooks, for these lists should be used only as works of reference.

#### XI.—Savoir, connaître

Two of the worst stumbling blocks of the French.

Remember that:

I.—To know that..... { are } *savoir que*.....  
 To know if, etc . . . { } *savoir si*, etc.....

II.—*CONNAÎTRE* is always used with a direct object, and that object cannot be a VERB.

III.—*CONNAÎTRE*, and not *savoir*, is used in the meaning of "to be acquainted with."

#### XII.—Vieille, veille, vielle

Notice the spelling of these words:

*vieille*—old (fem.)  
*veille* (f)—the eve  
*vielle* (f)—hurdy gurdy

#### XIII.—Est-ce-que

Notice that if, in the course of a conversation, you experience some difficulty about the place of pronouns or the construction in general when you use the interrogative form, you can *always* begin the sentence with *EST-CE-QUE*, which does not alter the primitive construction of that sentence.

## Examples:

He remembers: **il se souvient.**

Does he remember: **est-ce-qu'il se souvient?**

I would have given it to him: **je le lui aurais donné.**

Would I have given it to him: **est ce que je le lui aurais donné?**

**Est-ce-que** does not necessarily express "astonishment"—in spite of the affirmations of some grammarians.

## XIV.—En-à

Do not use indifferently **EN**, **À**, or **DANS** when you wish to translate **in** or **at** before the name of a country or that of a city.

**En** is used with countries: **en France.**

**À** is used with cities: **à Paris.**

I am in my room at London in England:

**Je suis DANS ma chambre À Londres EN Angleterre.**

## PART IX.

## MISTAKES IN LETTER WRITING

I.—Do not write *Cher monsieur* [Dear Sir] to people whom you do not know. Use *Monsieur* alone.\*

II.—Do not use capitals for names of days or months in the body of a sentence; these are not proper nouns in French.

III.—Do not use ordinal but cardinal numbers for dates.  
The fifteenth of January is *LE QUINZE JANVIER*.

IV.—At the end of a letter, do not translate *Yours truly* by "*votre vraiment*," "*votre sincèrement*" or anything of the sort. Although it is very difficult for a foreigner to fathom the depths and appreciate the multifarious shades of meaning of French epistolary formulas, here are some rules which the student may safely go by.

- |   |          |  |
|---|----------|--|
| (a) in a business letter                                      | write: { | <i>Recevez, Monsieur, mes salutations empressées.</i>  |
| (b) to high officials, (representatives, etc.)                | {        | <i>Veillez agréer, Monsieur le . . . l'assurance de ma haute considération.</i>                            |
| (c) to some one with whom you are acquainted but not intimate | {        | <i>Recevez, je vous prie, l'assurance de ma considération distinguée.</i>                                  |
| (d) a little less formal                                      | {        | <i>Croyez, cher monsieur, à mes meilleurs sentiments.</i>  |
| (e) a man to a woman  | {        | <i>Veillez agréer, Madame, mes respectueux hommages.</i>   |
| (f) to a friend   | {        | <i>Bien à vous.<br/>Tout à vous.<br/>Votre tout dévoué.<br/>Sincèrement à vous.<br/>Votre affectionné.</i> |

VI.—Do not translate literally, at the end of a letter, *Respectfully* or *Yours respectfully*. This expression, which is meaningless in English epistolary style, is always taken in its proper sense in French, and therefore used only from inferior to superior in business or civil service. A woman specially should be very careful to avoid it in French when writing to a man.

\* The practice of addressing people, in a letter or in conversation, by their family name—"i.e." *Monsieur Blank* or *Cher monsieur Blank*, is to be avoided, as it is somewhat vulgar in French nowadays.

## Wrong expressions.

**Donnez lui mes amours.**

[give her my love.]

[from a woman to a woman.]

**Avec mes regards.**

[with kind regards.]

**Rappelez moi à lui.**

[remember me to him.]

**Votre respectueusement**

[Yours very respectfully.]

[from inferior to superior, in civil service, etc.]

## Correct expressions.

**Faites lui toutes mes amitiés.**

**Avec mes meilleurs souvenirs.**

**Rappelez moi à son bon souvenir.**

**Je reste avec respect votre humble serviteur.**

## PART X.

## ERRONEOUS FRENCH QUOTATIONS.

A number of French words, expressions or sentences which are offered as foreign quotations and usually written in italics in English literature, are not properly spelt or correctly used. Any one addicted to the study of French should avoid, above all, this particular kind of "stumbling blocks."

The list hereafter appended contains only the most common misquotations. There are many others.

**Au fond.**

**Right enough** when taken in the meaning of "at bottom," "at the bottom," "in reality," is **wrong** if used for "thoroughly" which is, in French,

**à fond.**

**Aventurier**

is sometimes used with the meaning of a "venturesome character, a happy-go-lucky fellow, fond of change," etc. This is **wrong**, as the word is always contemptuous in French.

**Blanc-mange**

should be spelt

**Blanc-manger**  
(white food)

**Chef.**

It is a widely spread misconception to consider this name as referring **always** to a **cook**. It is in reality the regular translation of "chief."

**Chacun à son goût.**

As this expression means "every one has his own taste," the word "a" is a verb and must not take the accent.

**Demi-tasse**

is sometimes mistaken for **half a cup** of coffee. It means a **cup of coffee without milk**.

**Femme de chambre**

is NOT a **chambermaid** but a **lady's maid**. "Chambermaid" is

**Fille de chambre.**

**Gendarme.**

This word is often misused by foreigners. The "Gendarme" is a rural guard, not a city policeman. The latter is called:

in Paris: **Gardien de la Paix.**

elsewhere: **Sergent de ville** or **Agent de police.**

**Négligée**

[morning dress] should not be spelt with two "e." The French word is

**négligé.**

"She is in **négligé.**"

- Papier mache** should be spelt **papier mâché**  
for the last word is the past participle of the verb **mâcher** [to chew].
- Pell-mell** when dressed up in italics as a French idiom is not spelt correctly. The French expression is:  
**pêle-mêle.**
- Réchauffé** [old material worked up again]. Should be spelt with one "e." The French word is  
**réchauffé.**  
"It is a **réchauffé** of an old book."
- Sans culotte** is NOT a "ragged fellow," as a well known dictionary puts it, but a patriot who during the French Revolution had discarded the breeches (culottes), an aristocratic garb, for the plain trousers.
- Sacre!** an exclamation commonly attributed to French characters by some comic papers, is NOT CORRECT. It means "coronation." The correct expression in French is  
**Sacrebleu!**  
derived from **Sacré Dieu** [by the sacred God].
- Naïve.** Right enough when you speak of a woman, is not correct when referring to a man. In that case write or say:  
**naïf** [na-iff]
- A revoir!** used for "good bye!" is not correct, for, to a Frenchman, it means: "to be revised." Write or say:  
**au revoir**
- En suite.** This expression is correct when used in the meaning of  
"following each other."  
For instance:  
"I rented three rooms **en suite.**"  
although **se faisant suite** is more generally employed in order to avoid a confusion with the adverb **ENSUITE** (afterwards). But **en suite** is WRONG when used with the meaning of  
"as a complement,"  
"as an accompaniment."  
In the following paragraph, culled from the Fashion Notes of a leading New York daily:  
"also Siberian squirrel with stole-fronted collar-ette and huge Directoire muff **en suite,**"  
the quotation is faulty.

**Fleur de lis.**

The last word in this quotation is usually pronounced "li" (in English "lee"). This is a mistake, for the final "s" must be sounded.

However, in heraldry, this "s" is mute. Therefore the following rhymes are correct in a poem on a crest:

"He chose the **Fleur de lis**.  
All men shall see  
My **Fleur de lis**  
To think of me."

Klio Club, Chicago, 1902.

**Mayonnaise**

must not be pronounced

**may-onnaise**, but  
**ma-i-onnaise**

[English: **mah-ee-onnaise**.]

**Encore.**

It is absolutely incorrect, at the French point of view, to say:

The singer had many "**encores**."

The proper word is: **rappel** or: **bis**.

A Frenchman would say:

**Tel morceau a été BISSÉ plusieurs fois.**

**Double entendre**

is not correct. The correct expression is:

**à double entente**

[**entente** is meaning; **entendre**, to hear.]

**de gaité du cœur.**

This expression has been used by several writers, for instance by Mrs. Oliphant in her "Life of Richard Brinsley Sheridan."

Say: **de gaité de cœur**.

**à l'outrance.**

[to the utmost].

Say: **à outrance**.

**soubriquet**

is not French. If the good old English word "nickname," which means the same thing, does not suit you, and if you wish to use what Professor Hill calls "borrowed finery,"

Say: **sobriquet**.

**vis à vis.**

A much more useful loan from the French, is correct only if it is pronounced: **vi-za-vi**.

[English: **vee-zah-vee**]

## PART XI.

## A FEW HINTS

TO STUDENTS WHO HAVE SOME DIFFICULTY IN UNDER-  
STANDING FRENCH

I.—Bear in mind that the **greatest obstacle** in that matter lies in the habit of French speaking people to **carry over** or “link” the **final consonant of words**. This practice makes it difficult for the novice to catch the words independently from one another.\*

In consequence, we advise the student to get **thoroughly familiar** himself with the linking of final consonants by “drilling” carefully and patiently.

II.—Notice the difference of meaning resulting from a different accentuation of the same word. (See Appendix on Pronunciation, III. Miscellaneous.)

III.—You will avoid some misinterpretations by mastering the following list, containing nouns which **sound alike** although their spelling may differ.

\* To the untrained ear a sentence like this: *les ennemis arrivent en un instant*, seems to be a single long word; moreover, the carrying over of the “t” of *arrivent* is misleading, for it gives a sound to a third person plural which would be silent otherwise.



## A FEW HINTS TO STUDENTS WHO HAVE SOME DIFFICULTY IN UNDERSTANDING FRENCH

|   |   |  |                         |  |
|---|---|--|-------------------------|--|
| a, has [he]<br>bai, bay [color]   | a, to, at<br>baie, bay [geog.]  | bate, light [win-<br>dow]  | bat[il]beats [he]       |  |
| balai, broom<br>bas, stocking<br>bois, wood<br>car, for<br>champ, field<br>cher, dear<br>cité, city<br>coin, corner<br>col, collar<br>conte, tale<br>coq, rooster<br>cou, neck<br>cour, court | ballet, ballet<br>bas, low<br>bois[je]drinks[I]<br>quart, quart<br>chant, song<br>chair, flesh<br>cité, quoted<br>coing, quince<br>col, pass<br>compte, account<br>coque, shell<br>coup, stroke<br>court, short | bât, pack-saddle<br><br>chaire, pulpit<br><br>colle, mucilage<br>comte, count<br>coût, cost<br>cours, hunt |                         |  |
| cousin, cousin<br>crâne, skull<br>encre, ink<br>faim, hunger<br>fait, fact<br>flan, cheesecake<br>fond, bottom  | cousin, gnat<br>crâne, plucky<br>ancre, anchor<br>fin, end<br>fait [il] makes[he]<br>flanc, flank<br>fonds, fund  | fin, fine<br>fée, fairy<br><br>fonta, font[reig.]  | cours, course,<br>class |  |
| frais [le] fresh air<br>fumée, smoke  | frais[les]expenses<br>fumet, flavour,<br>scent<br>gages [les]wages<br>Galles, Wales<br>gaze, gauze<br>gelée, jelly  | frai, spawn<br><br><br><br>gelé, frozen  | font[ils]make<br>[they] |  |
| gage [le], pledge<br>gale, itch<br>gaz, gas<br>gelée, frost   |   |  |                         |  |

| gens [les] people    | Jean, John                 | gent [la] tribe, j'en [ai], I have some |
|----------------------|----------------------------|---|
| glace, ice           | glace, looking-glass       | folk [poet]                             |
| hôtel, hotel         | autel, altar               |   |
| joue, cheek          | joue [je], play [I]        | joug, yoke                              |
| lis, lily            | lice, lists [to enter the] | lisse, smooth                           |
| long, long           | l'on, one, they            |   |
| louer, to praise     | louer, to let              |   |
| lune, moon           | l'une, the one             |   |
| mer, sea             | mère, mother               |   |
| mine, mine           | mine, mien, look           |   |
| mon, my              | mont, mount                |   |
| mot, word            | maux, evils                |   |
| mur, wall            | mûre, mulberry             | mûr, ripe                               |
| ne, not              | neud, knot                 |   |
| né, born             | nez, nose                  | n'est, is not                           |
| neuf, nine           | neuf, new                  |   |
| ni, neither          | nid, nest                  |   |
| ou, or               | où, where                  |   |
| outré, besides       | outré, leather bottle      | houx, holly                             |
| pain, bread          | pin, pine                  | peins [je], paint [I]                   |
| pan, tail [of coat]  | Pan, Pan [myth]            | pan! bang!                              |
| pas, not             | pas, step                  |   |
| par, by              | part, part [a]             | part [je] depart [I]                    |
| parti [le], party    | partie, part               | parti, departed                         |
| peau, skin           | pot, pot                   |   |
| penser, to think     | panser, to groom           | pensée, pansy                           |
| père, father         | père, pair                 | pair, peer                              |
| plaine, plain, field | pleine, full [fem.]        | pair, par                               |
|                      |                            | pends [je] hang [I]                     |
|                      |                            | paon, peacock                           |
|                      |                            | pare [je] ward off [I]                  |
|                      |                            |   |
|                      |                            | house, hoe                              |



|                   |                          |                            |                              |                        |
|-------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| sur, upon         | sdr, sure                | sdr, sour                  | tais [je me],<br>keep silent | I                      |
| taie, pillow case | taie, speck [eye]        | thé, tea                   |                              |                        |
| tare, tare        | tard, late               |                            |                              |                        |
| taux, rate        | tôt, early               |                            |                              |                        |
| teint, complexion | tain, tinfoil            |                            |                              |                        |
| temps, time       | tant, so much            | taon, gad fly              |                              |                        |
| tente, tent       | tante, aunt              |                            |                              |                        |
| tien, thine       | tiens [je], hold [I]     |                            |                              |                        |
| tort, wrong       | tors, twisted            |                            |                              |                        |
| toux, cough       | tout, all                | toue, ferry-boat           |                              |                        |
| tribu, tribe      | tribut, tribute          |                            |                              |                        |
| trot, trot        | trop, too much           |                            |                              |                        |
| veau, veal        | vos, your                | vaux [je], worth<br>[I am] |                              |                        |
| veine, vein       | vaine, vain [fem.]       |                            |                              |                        |
| vent, wind        | van, winnowing<br>basket |                            |                              |                        |
| ver, worm         | vers, verse              | vers, towards              | vert, green                  | verre, glass           |
| vin, wine         | vain, vain (m)           | vingt, twenty              |                              |                        |
| vu, seen          | vue, sight               |                            |                              | vair, a kind of<br>fur |

## PART XII.

## A LIST

## OF VERY FAMILIAR EXPRESSIONS OR WORDS

Commonly Used by the French in Conversation or Current Literature.

**T**HIS list is quite an innovation in an educational work.

Let it be understood from the first that it is **not** a short dictionary of slang, although it contains a few expressions which are undoubtedly "poor French." All the words hereafter classified are constantly used in familiar style or conversation; many of them indeed are not disowned by French Academiciens; but few have gained admission to the standard dictionaries, and this is why we have grouped them together as methodically as possible.

The following is chiefly a REFERENCE LIST, although the student might occasionally make use himself of these "familiar expressions." The words which are not strictly *bon ton* will be found marked with a †

## QUALIFYING MAN

|   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| un âne bâté [a saddled ass]             | a regular ass            |
| une culotte de peau [buckskin breeches] | a stultified old warrior |
| un débrouillard                         | a handy fellow           |
| un drôle de corps* [funny body]         | a queer fellow           |
| un dût à cuire [hard to cook]           | a hardy one              |
| un foudre de guerre                     | a mighty warrior         |
| une ganache                             | a dotard                 |
| un gabelou                              | custom house officer     |
| un gniaf                                | cobbler                  |
| un gogo                                 | a "credulous flat"       |
| un iroquois                             | a "rum one"              |
| un jobard                               | a "flat"                 |
| un larbin                               | a flunkey                |
| un loup de mer [sea-wolf]               | Jack Tar                 |
| un loup garou [were wolf]               | a "bear"                 |

\* Also un drôle de paroissien [lit: a funny parishioner.]

|   |   |
|---|---|
| un maître homme                         | a clever man                                    |
| une maritorne                           | a wench   |
| un miriflore, [muscadin]                | a regular fop                                   |
| un Mr. Chose                            | Mr. What's his name                             |
| un paltoquet                            | a clumsy lout                                   |
| un pioupiou                             | foot soldier "boy in blue" "red coat" [England] |
| un pipelet                              | janitor   |
| un petit maître                         | a fop, a snob                                   |
| un pleurard                             | one who is always crying                        |
| un pleutre                              | a contemptible man                              |
| un pochard                              | a drunkard                                      |
| un pion [man (at draughts)]             | usher [in a school]                             |
| un rabat-joie [joy killer]              | a "wet blanket"                                 |
| un raseur [raser: to shave]†            | a bore  |
| un rat de cave [cellar rat]             | excise man                                      |
| un rat d'église [church rat]            | church beggar                                   |
| un rat d'opéra [opera-rat]†             | ballet girl                                     |
| un raté [a miss]†                       | a "dead failure"                                |
| un rond de cuir [a rubber-seat cushion] | a sedentary man                                 |
| un roublard                             | a shrewd one                                    |
| un sagouin                              | a slovenly fellow                               |
| un salaud                               | a dirty fellow                                  |
| un saligaud                             | a nasty individual                              |
| une sangsue [leech]                     | a "blood sucker"                                |
| une sainte-n'y-touche                   | a smooth hypocrite                              |
| un triste sire                          | a wicked man                                    |
| un vert galant                          | a ladies' man                                   |
| une vieille potiche [old Chinese vase]  | old "stick in the mud"                          |
| un voyou                                | a cad   |

## VERBS

|  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| Avoir une dent contre                                      | to have a grudge against |
| Avoir la langue bien pendue<br>[a tongue which hangs well] | to be a slanderer        |
| Avoir son pompon [a top knot]†                             | to be "very gay"         |
| Blaguer  | to tell fibs             |
| Bouffer [to puff, to swell]†                               | to eat                   |
| Bâcher   | to study hard            |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Chipoter [se]   | to dally, to haggle                       |
| Embêter†  | to bore some one to death                 |
| Envoyer promener                                      | to send some one "to the shades"          |
| Faire la barbe à [to shave]                           | to bore some one                          |
| Faire une boulette [a pellet]                         | to blunder                                |
| Faire une brioche [a bun]†                            | to make a mistake                         |
| Faire de l'épate, de l'esbrouff†                      | to "bluff"                                |
| Faire un four   | to make a blunder, to be a "dead failure" |
| Faire une gaffe [a boat hook]                         | to make a blunder                         |
| Faire son deuil de [to get in mourning for]           | to give up as hopeless                    |
| Faire la noce [wedding feast]†                        | to have a "jolly time"                    |
| Faire un pied de nez à [to make a nose one foot long] | to snub some one                          |
| Filer   | to skip                                   |
| Financer†   | to pay, to "cough up"                     |
| Finir mal [to end badly]                              | to come to a bad end                      |
| Fourrer†  | to place, to put, to "jam"                |
| Gueuler [from Gueule, jaw]†                           | to brawl, to "jaw"                        |
| Laver la tête à [to wash some-body's head]            | to give a lecture to                      |
| Mettre dedans   | to "take in," to "do" some one            |
| Potasser  | to study hard                             |
| Rebiffer [se]†  | to be refractory, to "kick"               |
| Trimbalier  | to drag . . . . . about                   |
| Trimer  | to drudge                                 |
| Turlupiner  | to ridicule                               |

## ADJECTIVES.

|                      |                                      |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Détraqué             | "cracked"                            |
| Fichu                | very poor [fig.] "done for"          |
| Flou*                | soft                                 |
| Mirobolant           | stunning, "first rate"               |
| Puant [stinking]†    | conceited                            |
| Rigolo†              | very funny                           |
| Salé [salted]        | { very expensive                     |
| Toqué [Toque: a cap] | { c'est salé: That is salting it on! |
| Veule                | "cranky," "crazy"                    |
|                      | "soft," shifty [a man]               |

\* This word is getting more and more used every year, specially in Paris.

## NOUNS.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Bachot</b>                           | Abrev. for <b>Baccalauréat</b> [a bachelor degree]              |
| <b>Bagou</b>                            | the gift of the gab   |
| <b>Barbe</b> [à sa barbe]               | to his face   |
| <b>Blague</b> [tobacco-pouch]           | fib   |
| <b>Bosse</b> [du dessin, de la musique] | the gift [of drawing, etc.]                                     |
| <b>Canard</b> [a duck]                  | bogus news  |
| <b>Claque</b> [a slap]                  | troop of hired applauders                                       |
| <b>Clou</b> [a nail]                    | a "hit"   |
| <b>Conte à dormir debout</b>            | idle tale   |
| <b>Croûte</b> [a crust]                 | rubbish; [picture]: "daub"                                      |
| <b>Cuir</b> [leather]                   | vulgar mispronunciation   |
| <b>Dada</b> [horse]                     | hobby   |
| <b>la Haute or la Haute Pègre</b>       | the "swell mob"   |
| <b>Galette</b> [a sort of butter cake]† | money, "dough"  |
| <b>Langue verte</b> [the green tongue]  | a name for slang  |
| <b>Machine</b>                          | very commonly used in French:<br>"Cette machine—là", That thing |
| <b>Panade</b> [bread soup]              | a "fix" "Etre dans la panade,"<br>To be in a "fix"              |
| <b>Pâté</b> [pie]                       | blot of ink   |
| <b>Patraque</b>                         | of things: out of order; of man:<br>"shaky"                     |
| <b>Platine</b> [plate]                  | the gift of the gab   |
| <b>Quibus</b> [du]                      | "tin"   |
| <b>Riflard</b>                          | old family umbrella   |
| <b>Sac</b> [bag]†                       | "Il a le sac"<br>He is a money bag                              |
| <b>Saint-frusquin</b>                   | the whole outfit, the whole kit,<br>"one's brass"               |
| <b>Sapin</b> [pine wood]†               | a cab   |
| <b>Scie</b> [une] [saw]                 | of things: a bore   |
| <b>Toutou</b>                           | little dog  |
| <b>Truc</b>                             | a trick   |
| <b>Veste</b> [waistcoat]                | a failure   |
| <b>Vieux jeu</b>                        | old fashioned idea, "C'est vieux jeu"                           |

## SUNDRIES.

|                                      |                   |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Boire du lait</b> [to drink milk] | to be "in clover" |
| <b>Cela ne passe pas!</b>            | It is "no go"     |



C'est dernier cri [last cry]\*

C'est du propre ! [clean]

C'est épatant†

Etre à sec [dry]

Il n'a que la peau sur les os

Il a une araignée dans le plafond [a spider in his ceiling]

Il a mis du foin dans ses bottes  
[He put hay in his shoes]

Jeter sa langue aux chiens  
[to throw one's tongue to the dogs]

Manger de la vache enragée  
[to feast on mad cow]

Attrape !

Allez y voir ! [go and see it]

Faire le pied de grue [to stand  
on one foot like a crane]

Descends de ton cheval !

Que oui !

Vous n'êtes guère dégourdi  
[you are hardly thawed out]

Quatre pelés et un tondu [four  
bald ones and a shorn one]

Comptez-y et buvez de l'eau claire !  
[rely upon it and drink pure  
water]

Il se gobe [he swallows himself]

Une famille huppée  
[a crested family]

Un vieux de la vieille  
[a veteran from the Old Guard]

It's entirely new, the last thing !

That's nice ! [sarcasm]

It's stunning !

to be hard up

He is only skin and bones

He has a bee in his bonnet

He feathered his nest

to give up guessing

to have hard times

Catch that !—Good for you, for him !

Believe it if you can !—Get it if you  
can !

to wait patiently

Come down from your pedestal—  
Don't "bluff" any more !

Yes, to be sure !

You do not know much how to  
manage

a very poor audience, a half empty  
house [at the theatre]

You are a fool if you rely upon it

He has a "big head"

A "crack," a "swell" family

An old "dog of war"

\* This expression is a great favorite at present in Paris.

## PART XIII.

## ABOUT SOME ENGLISH AND FRENCH AFFIXES, ETC.

**S**TUDENTS are often embarrassed in trying to translate into French the English NOUNS\* ending in **full, less, load** and so forth.

On the other hand, some endings, in French, indicate plainly by themselves that the words to which they belong are terms of disparagement or even of contempt. Some others, which are merely affixes, modify the quality expressed by the original word.

Here are some rules or remarks which we should wish to impress on the learner's mind.

## I.—ENGLISH AFFIXES

1. **less**

Is very often rendered by the preposition **sans** followed by the noun.

Example: He was coatless, hatless and penniless. [*Il était sans habit, sans chapeau et sans le sou.*]

2. **load**

See No. 3 (affix **full**).

3. **full**

Is generally rendered by the French affix **ée** added to the primitive. Sometimes, for euphony or otherwise, the spelling of the latter is more or less changed in the derivative.

## (a) Primitive not altered

|                           |                                    |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| une aire [barn-floor]     | airée [barn-floor full of sheaves] |
| une aiguille [needle]     | aiguillée [needleful]              |
| une assiette [plate]      | assiettée [plateful]               |
| une auge [trough]         | augée [troughful]                  |
| la bouche [mouth]         | bouchée [mouthful (solids)]        |
| la brouette [wheelbarrow] | brouettée [wheelbarrow load]       |
| la chambre [room]         | chambrée [roomful (milit)]         |
| la charrette [cart]       | charrettée [cartload]              |
| la cuve [vat]             | cuvée [vatful]                     |

\* We are speaking of nouns, not of adjectives.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

also **bellâtre**, a foppish fellow  
**douceâtre**, sweetish  
**gentillâtre**, a would-be gentleman  
**marâtre**, a cruel mother or stepmother

2. **asse**

Often conveys an idea of thickness for things, of dullness for persons.

Examples: **bon** [good]      **bonasse** [simple, silly]  
**soupe** [soup]      **soupasse** [thick soup]  
**millet** [millet]      **millasse** (pudding made of millet)  
**ville** [town]      **villasse** [an outgrown village]

3. **ette**

Is used for diminutive.

Examples: **amour** [love]      **amourette** [little love affair]  
**biche** [hind]      **bichette** [little hind—term of endearment]  
**broche** [spit]      **brochette** [skewer]  
**boule** [ball]      **boulette** [pellet]  
**chemise**      **chemisette**  
**col** [collar]      **collerette**  
**couche** [bed]      **couchette** [cot]  
**courbe** [curve]      **courbette** [cringing]  
**cuve** [vat]      **cuvette** [handbasin]  
**gras** [fat]      **grassouillette** [plump]  
**hache** [axe]      **hachette** [hatchet]  
**histoire** [story]      **historiette** [little story]  
**montagne** [mountain]      **montagnette** [hill]  
**poule** [hen]      **poulette** [pet hen]  
**Jeanne**      **Jeannette**  
**Marie**      **Mariette**  
**Paule**      **Paulette**  
etc.

4. **rogne**

This ending, which seems quite unmusical to a French ear, is not frequent; but in every instance it belongs to a word which expresses something repulsive.

## Examples

**ivrogne**, a drunkard  
**trogne** the face of a drunkard  
**charogne** a carrion

As for **rogne** itself, it means a kind of skin disease!

5. *ment*

This affix is the characteristic of **adverbs** and corresponds to the English affix **ly**. Remember that, in French, adverbs are usually formed from adjectives by adding **MENT** to the feminine form of the latter.

**grand**  
**doux**

**grande**  
**douce**

**grandement**  
**doucement**

6. Prefix *re*

Notice that the idea expressed in English by "back" or "again" is rendered by the prefix **RE** in French.

to come back, **revenir**

to do again **refaire**

## PART XIV.

## ABOUT SOME POPULAR TYPES OR CHARACTERS COMMONLY ALLUDED TO IN FRENCH LITERATURE OR CONVERSATION.

**I**N French, more, perhaps, than in any other tongue, frequent references are made to sundry characters of the masterpieces of the national literature, which have become, so to speak, regular adjectives. Some of these, it is true, have acquired a world-wide fame; but most of them do not convey any meaning to the mind of foreigners.

That is why we have assimilated them to the other "stumbling blocks" of the language.

**Gargantua**

An immortal creation in the masterpiece of Rabelais bearing this title.

A popular name to designate a man endowed with an insatiable appetite.

*Cet enfant est un vrai Gargantua.*

**Les moutons de Panurge**

This expression depicts people who hurry to do a thing just for imitation's sake and without any good reason. It is an allusion to Panurge's sheep in Rabelais's *Pantagruel*.

**Raminagrobis**

A name given to a cat by La Fontaine in one of his fables. Very often applied since, in a bantering way, to this animal.

Origin: a character in Rabelais's *Gargantua*.

**Dulcinée**

"*Dulcinée*," in French, is generally applied, as a term of contempt, to the lady love of some inexperienced youth.

Origin: *Dulcinée*, from Toboso, in Cervantes's *Don Quixote*.\*

**Scapin**

A prominent character in *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, by Molière.

It is the type of the impudent and crafty "valet."

**Tartufe**

Another character in one of Molière's comedies (*Le Tartufe*). Will remain for ever in French the impersonation of hypocrisy.

\* This is, as the reader can see, borrowed from the Spanish literature.

**Harpagon**

The leading character in *L'Avare*, a comedy by Molière. Is the classical type of the miser.

**Ce vieux Harpagon** [this old miser.]

**Georges Dandin**

Also from a comedy by Molière. Is given, as a nickname, to a man who has married above his condition, and is obliged to endure with patience his wife's whims and extravagance.

**L'avocat Patelin**

A very amusing comedy by Palaprat [1706.] The leading character, a rather disreputable barrister, is to-day the type of the unscrupulous and soft-tongued lawyer.

**Quasimodo**

This character of Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris* gave birth to the popular expression:

**Laid comme Quasimodo**

[as ugly as Quasimodo]

**Perrette**

The impersonation of the dreamer, who builds castles in the air.

Origin: the milkwoman in La Fontaine's *Perrette et le Pot au lait*.

**Père Goriot**

A character in one of Balzac's best works. Impersonates a weak father, ill-treated by his children.

**Roger Bontemps**

[Roger Good-Time.] Béranger, the great French song writer, made this character very popular by his famous lines:

**Vivre obscur à sa guise,**

**Narguer les mécontents**

**Eh gail c'est la devise**

**Du gros Roger Bontemps.**

A "bon vivant," enamored of life, and happy in spite of all.

**Mimi Pinson**

"Pinson," a chaffinch.

"Gai comme pinson" corresponds to the English "lively as a lark."

**Mimi Pinson**, the graceful and immensely popular creation of Alfred de Musset, is a female Roger Bontemps. Often applied to impecunious shop-girls or seamstresses who face bad luck with cheerfulness and courage.

**Le marquis de Carabas**

A character of Perrault's *Chat Botté* (Puss in the boots), who became rich, thanks to the craft and the audacity of his pet cat.

Applied to a "nouveau riche," who has been more lucky than industrious.

**Robert Macaire**

A creation of the famous playwright, Frédéric Lemaitre. The type of the modern "sharp."

**Tartarin**

The hero of a series of Alphonse Daudet's novels. Such was the success of this work that "Tartarin" became very quickly in France the impersonation of the Southern man; boastful and noisy, but, at bottom, as guileless as a child.

**Joseph Prud'homme**

A creation of Henri Monnier, a very witty French writer. Mr. Prud'homme personifies the "bourgeois," ponderous, solemn and silly. Many of his utterances are classical, so to speak, in French literature. For instance:

**Ce sabre est le plus beau jour de ma vie**  
[this sword is the happiest day of my life].

**Le char de l'Etat navigue sur un volcan.**  
[the chariot of the State navigates upon a volcano].

French cartoonists often bring Mr. Prud'homme into play.

**Jacques Bonhomme**

Characterizes the whole French people, and corresponds to the English John Bull and to the American Uncle Sam.

Usually represented as a good-natured countryman, held in bondage in old times by the "seigneurs," and nowadays by the red tape and the "circumlocution offices" of the omnipotent French Administration.

**Père Lorrain**

A French historian, who died in 1865. Has remained the type of a silly old man, always afraid of improprieties.

**Dumanet****Colonel Ramollot**

is the French Tommy Atkins.

[A new creation] Is among the officers what Dumanet is in the rank and file.

Origin: ramolli [a "soft one."]

**Pandore**

The usual nickname of the gendarme (French constabulary). Has its origin in a witty song which brings into play a corporal of constables and a private, named Pandore, the latter blindly acquiescing in everything his superior officer chances to say.

**Calino**

From calin [wheedling, lazy]; a type of soft-minded weakly man; something like "Pat" of the American comic papers.

Always represented in the garb of a city dweller.



**Marlborough**

The French, seemingly to get even with the English General Marlborough, who had defeated them often at the beginning of the eighteenth century, made him the hero of a burlesque ballad. His name, wrongly pronounced *mal-brou*, became extremely popular with many generations of Frenchmen; and "*Marlborough s'en va-t-en guerre*" is still a song dear to the school-children of France. Curiously enough, the tune adapted to the words is that of the English song, "For he is a jolly good fellow."

*Les quatre-z'officiers de Marlborough*—an expression sometimes used to designate busy bodies, who talk much and do nothing.

**Mr. de la Palice**

A famous French general, killed at Pavia in 1525. Like Marlborough, he became popular through a burlesque song. There is no child in France who did not dance or sing the ronde "*Mr. de la Palice est mort.*"

Although Marshal de la Palice was by no means a silly man, the legend attributes to him a great many speeches and remarks ridiculously commonplace. Hence the expression, *Vérité de la Palice*, to designate an emphatic and lengthy exposition of a self-evident fact.

**Le roi Dagobert**

Like the two warriors above mentioned, King Dagobert, one of the ablest rulers France ever had, was unfortunate enough to be ridiculized in a ballad, together with his State Minister, Saint Eloi. To the French, this king is certainly better known as *le roi qui met sa culotte à l'envers* [the king who puts on his breeches wrong side out] than as the greatest legislator of the seventh century.

*C'est comme le roi Dagobert* is an expression not unfrequently used when speaking of a man who finds himself, by his own fault, "in a nice mess."

**La mère Michel**

A very familiar figure in children's books. Represents an elderly widow who worships an unmanageable cat. This appellation is, of course, often bestowed upon old maids, in popular literature.

**La Fée Carabosse**

One of the ugliest characters in the French fairy tales. A term of contempt to qualify an old gossip, a mischief-maker.

- Cartouche and Mandrin** Two famous French banditti in the eighteenth century. Their names are frequently given to bold highwaymen.
- Colombine** Originally a character in the old Italian comedy; now one of the characters of the country fair theatre in France. A kind of "soubrette."
- Jocrisse** Originally a character in the street shows of old France. Now a sort of "soft," a "green youth" (country shows).
- Pierrot** An ordinary character of the French pantomime, always clad in white, with the face sprinkled over with flour.
- Arlequin** Like Colombine, belonged at first to the old Italian comedy. A common disguise at fancy dress balls, and an ubiquitous figure in the streets on Mardi Gras. His dress is made up of numberless pieces of cloth of all colors: hence the name of **Arlequin**, given in French to a man who in politics has no conviction of his own, a "regular weather cock."
- Paillasse** Same origin as Arlequin and Colombine. A sort of clown who is used outside of the show to attract the attention of passers by and draw them in. This name is also a term of contempt applied to low politicians.
- Polichinelle** Same origin as above. Used in Italy to represent the Neapolitan citizen, vulgar, but witty and sarcastic. In France he degenerated into a humpbacked and gaily attired character of the popular "farces," personifying the Gallic wit and humor. Of late, he has lost much of his old importance. He is hardly found now elsewhere than in the Punch and Judy show (in French: **Guignol**).
- Auguste [alias Guguss]** A nickname commonly given of late to the circus clowns.
- Smalah** In Arabian, the private convoy or train of a chief. The capture of Abd-El-Kader's Smalah by the Duc d'Aumale in 1842 has popularized this word in France, where it is used to-day to designate a retinue of servants, or a family with many children, etc.

**Les naufragés de la Méduse** The wreck of the ship *La Méduse*, in July, 1816, is justly considered in France as the most terrible tragedy of the sea. The hideous scenes which took place on the famous raft made up of the "débris" of the *Méduse*, are frequently alluded to in literature, and the disaster itself employed metaphorically in many ways.

**La marquise de Pretintaille** A type created by Beranger to represent the prejudices of the old nobility in France.

**Landerneau** A city in Brittany, which enjoys the privilege of being made fun of by comic papers and playwrights.

**Carpentras** Same explanation. These cities, (and sometimes Brives-la-Gaillarde), are the "Oshkoshs and Kalamazoos" of France.

## APPENDIX

## STUMBLING BLOCKS IN FRENCH PRONUNCIATION

**T**HIS is not, by any means, a treatise on pronunciation.

Our only aim here is to warn students against some serious mistakes **very often** made by foreigners in reading or speaking French.

## DIFFICULTY NO. 1

The letter S.

It is a common mistake for English speaking people to make no difference between "s" and "ss" in the body of a French word. This usually leads to ridiculous, sometimes to painful misunderstandings. For instance:

**Donnez moi un plat de poisson**

[Give me a dish of fish]

will puzzle somewhat a French waiter if you give to "ss" the sound of a soft "s," and pronounce the last word **po-ah-zon** [poison].

Again in:

**Il est couché sur un coussin**

[He is reclining upon a cushion]

you must be careful to pronounce the last word **couss-in**, and **NOT** **cou-zin**, which would make you say:

"He is reclining upon a **cousin**."

and so forth.

**Remark.**—Notice the difference between

**frison** [curl]  
**rose** [rose]  
**embraser** [to set on fire]  
**poison** [poison]  
**case** [case]  
**Lise** [Lise, a first name]  
**cousin** [cousin]  
**ruse** [ruse]  
**base** [base]  
**baiser** [to kiss]  
**d'osier** [made of willow]  
**ils ont** [they have]

and **frisson** [shiver]  
**rosse** [old nag]  
**embrasser** [to embrace]  
**poisson** [fish]  
**casé** [breakage]  
**lisse** [smooth]  
**coussin** [cushion]  
**russe** [Russian]  
**basse** [low-(feminine)]  
**baisser** [to lower]  
**dossier** [back of a chair]  
**ils sont** [they are]

## DIFFICULTY NO. 2

Numbers: cinq, six, sept, huit, neuf, dix.

**RULE.**—I. At the end of a sentence [or before a vowel] **PRONOUNCE the last letter.**

II. In the body of a sentence, before a consonant the last letter is **SILENT.**

Examples:

I. J'ai rencontré cinq élèves [cink]; ils sont cinq [cink].

II. J'ai rencontré cinq voitures [cin].

**EXCEPTION:** dix sept, dix huit, dix neuf.  
[diz-set, diz-huit, diz-neuf]

## DIFFICULTY NO. 3]

et, est.

**RULE.**—The "t" is always silent in et [and], as a contrast to est [is].

Examples:

L'homme spirituel est agréable en société.  
Cet homme passe pour spirituel et agréable.

## DIFFICULTY NO. 4

plus.

**RULE.**—At the end of a sentence:

"s" is **SILENT** if plus means: **no more.**

"s" is **PRONOUNCED** if plus means: **more.**

Examples:

Vous voulez des cigares? Je n'en ai plus [plu]  
Je n'ai qu'un cigare: donnez m'en plus [pluss]

## DIFFICULTY NO. 5.

tous, tout.

**RULE.**—At the end of a sentence, the "t" of tout is **SILENT** as a contrast to tous, the "s" of which is **PRONOUNCED.**

Example:

Je les ai tous; c'est tout.  
[touss] [tou]

## DIFFICULTY NO. 6

The ending *ient*.

Few endings in French are more misused than this particular one. Students will avoid many mistakes by keeping in mind that "ent" is SILENT in verbs, as ending of the third person plural.

Examples:

*Ils portent* [por-te]  
*Ils copient* [co-pi]  
*Ils avaient* [a-vé]

Otherwise, give "ient"

- 1st. The French sound I-IN, in verbs.
- 2d. The French sound I-AN in nouns.

Examples:

- 1st. *Il revient* [re-vi-in] he comes back.
- 2d. *inconvenient* [in-con-vé-ni-an] inconvenience.

Notice that the same ending has, therefore, three different sounds in the following sentence:

*Il convient qu'ils obviât à cet inconvenient.*

i-in                      i                      i-an  
 [verb singular]    [verb plural]                      [noun]  
 It is proper that they (should) obviate to this difficulty.

This is a rather striking illustration of the intricacies of French pronunciation.

## A FEW PRACTICAL ADVICES ABOUT PRONUNCIATION

I. Diphthong *ai*, *ais*.

It has become customary in France, and especially in Paris, to give to this diphthong the sound of "é" (close). For instance: *j'étais* (I was) is pronounced like *été* (been). Yet, as the French Academy and the Comédie Française—the two great authorities in matter of pronunciation—give still the broad sound to *ai* and *ais*, it is advisable to follow their example, without affectation.

Therefore pronounce:

|                    |           |
|--------------------|-----------|
| <i>j'avais</i>     | [j'avè]   |
| <i>j'étais</i>     | [j'éte]   |
| <i>ils avaient</i> | [ils avè] |
| <i>ils étaient</i> | [ils éte] |
| <i>épais</i>       | [épe]     |
| <i>mais</i>        | [mè] etc. |

## II. Mistakes arising from careless reading.

There is no excuse, indeed, for the following mistakes; however, they have become so common that they must be put down on our list of "stumbling blocks."

## Do not read

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>aimant</b> [magnet]          | for <b>amant</b> [lover]               |
| <b>alluminette</b> [?]          | " <b>allumette</b> [match]             |
| <b>Âme</b> [soul]               | " <b>âne</b> [donkey]                  |
| <b>Âne</b> [donkey]             | " <b>an</b> [year]                     |
| <b>amiable</b> [amicable]       | " <b>aimable</b> [amiable]             |
| <b>bagne</b> [convicts' prison] | " <b>bague</b> [ring]                  |
| <b>billiard</b>                 | " <b>billard</b>                       |
| <b>brilliant</b>                | " <b>brillant</b>                      |
| <b>cassé</b> [broken]           | " <b>caché</b> [hidden]                |
| <b>cheveux</b> [hair]           | " <b>chevaux</b> [horses]              |
| <b>cochon</b> [pig]             | " <b>cocher</b> [coachman]             |
| <b>cuisine</b> [kitchen]        | " <b>cousine</b> [cousin] fem.         |
| <b>dette</b> [debt]             | " <b>datte</b> [date] fruit            |
| <b>dessus</b> [above]           | " <b>dessous</b> [below]               |
| <b>enfant</b> [child]           | " <b>enfin</b> [at last]               |
| <b>exprès</b> [on purpose]      | " <b>express</b> [express]             |
| <b>faim</b> [hunger]            | " <b>femme</b> [woman]                 |
| <b>fil</b> [thread]             | " <b>ils</b> [son]                     |
| <b>fil</b> [son]                | " <b>filie</b> [daughter]              |
| <b>flâner</b> [to loiter]       | " <b>planer</b> [to soar]              |
| <b>fou</b> [mad]                | " <b>feu</b> [fire]                    |
| <b>gril</b> [gridiron]          | " <b>grille</b> [railing]              |
| <b>humour</b> [wit]             | " <b>humeur</b> [temper]               |
| <b>jaune</b> [yellow]           | " <b>jeune</b> [young]                 |
| <b>maçon</b> [mason]            | " <b>Mâcon</b> [name of a French city] |
| <b>manège</b> [riding school]   | " <b>ménage</b> [household]            |
| <b>masse</b> [mass]             | " <b>messe</b> [church mass]           |
| <b>ongle</b> [nail]             | " <b>oncle</b> [uncle]                 |
| <b>pain</b> [bread]             | " <b>peine</b> [trouble]               |
| <b>plus</b> [more]              | " <b>pluie</b> [rain]                  |
| <b>pour</b> [for]               | " <b>peur</b> [fear]                   |
| <b>poutre</b> [beam]            | " <b>poudre</b> [powder]               |
| <b>quatre</b> [four]            | " <b>quart</b> [quart] pron: car       |
| <b>repos</b> [rest]             | " <b>repas</b> [meal]                  |
| <b>sage</b> [wise]              | " <b>cage</b> [cage]                   |
| <b>saluter</b> [?]              | " <b>saluer</b> [to salute]            |
| <b>soif</b> [thirst]            | " <b>soir</b> [evening]                |
| <b>souffler</b> [to blow]       | " <b>siffler</b> [to whistle]          |
| <b>superintendant</b>           | " <b>surintendant</b> [superintendent] |
| <b>un</b> [one, a]              | " <b>on</b> [one (pronoun)]            |
| <b>vielle</b> [hurdy-gurdy]     | " <b>vieille</b> [old] fem.            |

## Do not pronounce

|             |                             |
|-------------|-----------------------------|
| bourgeois   | for bourgeois [bour-joie]*  |
| conduc-teur | " conducteur [con-duc-teur] |
| cuillère    | " cuiller [cu-y-err]        |
| ditelle     | " détail [dé-ta-il]         |
| Diou        | " Dieu [di-yeu]             |
| doil        | " deuil [deu-il]            |
| ékioupedge  | " équipage [é-ki-page]      |
| iouniform   | " uniforme [u-ni-form]      |
| montaigne   | " montagne [mon-ta-ni-eu]   |
| oil         | " ceil [eu-il]              |
| ouagon      | " wagon [va-gon]            |
| quaw        | " quoi [k'wa]               |
| quiou       | " queue [que]               |
| rispecte    | " respect [ress-pec]        |
| simpel      | " simple [sim-ple]          |
| sossaiété   | " société [so-cié-té]†      |

**Nota.**—We hardly need to tell the reader that we do not altogether rely upon the figurative sounds given above between brackets. Our object is chiefly to call his attention to the errors often made in the pronunciation of these words.

Remember that the only way to get a correct idea of the pronunciation of a difficult foreign word is to cause an educated native to pronounce it for you.

## III. Miscellaneous.

Mistakes and misunderstandings which arise from a wrong accentuation.

(Broad sounds for close sounds and vice versa.)

## Do not say

J'ai suivi la ch<sup>â</sup>sse [I followed the shrine] for: J'ai suivi la ch<sup>as</sup>se [the hunt]

J'ai vu la c<sup>ôte</sup> de la Bourse [I saw the rib of the Exchange] for: la cote [the quotations]

Le chien a donn<sup>é</sup> la p<sup>âte</sup> [the dog held out his paste] for: la patte [the paw]

Les Trois Grasses [the Three Fat Girls] for: les Trois Gr<sup>â</sup>ces [the Three Graces]

Ce m<sup>ât</sup>in [this mastiff] for: Ce m<sup>at</sup>in [this morning]

Le p<sup>ê</sup>cheur a pris une carpe [the sinner caught a carp] for: le p<sup>ê</sup>cheur [the fisherman]

Cet arb<sup>re</sup> croit rapidem<sup>ent</sup> [this tree believes quickly] for: croît [grows]

J'ai fini ma tach<sup>e</sup> [I have ended my stain] for: ma tâch<sup>e</sup> [my task]

(\*) French sounds.

(†) It is a common mistake to give the nasal sound to in before a vowel or a mute h: in that case, i keeps its original sound and n forms a syllable with the following vowel; i-nadmissible.

Both sounds of in are found in: inintelligible.  
i-nintelligible.



**La pomme de la main** [the apple of the hand] for: **la paume** [the palm]  
**Le sol pousse dans les lieux humides** [the ground grows in damp places]  
 for: **le saule** [willow]

**Je n'aime pas les jeunes** [I do not like young people] for: **les jeûnes**  
 [fast days]

**Rendre lame** [to give up one's blade] for: **l'âme** [one's soul]

|                               |     |                             |
|-------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------|
| <b>acre</b> [acre]            | for | <b>âcre</b> [acid]          |
| <b>fosse</b> [ditch]          | "   | <b>fausse</b> [false, fem.] |
| <b>la</b> [the, fem.]         | "   | <b>là</b> [there]           |
| <b>malle</b> [trunk]          | "   | <b>mâle</b> [male]          |
| <b>mètre</b> [meter]          | "   | <b>maître</b> [master]      |
| <b>molle</b> [soft, fem.]     | "   | <b>môle</b> [mole, pier]    |
| <b>mur</b> [wall]             | "   | <b>mûr</b> [ripe]           |
| <b>pale</b> [paddle wheel]    | "   | <b>pâle</b> [pale]          |
| <b>sur</b> [on]               | "   | <b>sûr</b> [sure]           |
| <b>hotte</b> [basket, hamper] | "   | <b>hôte</b> [host]          |

The following anecdote illustrates very well the results of a bad French pronunciation.

Some time ago a Brooklyn girl, anxious to show to some friends her proficiency in French, took up one of the latest novels from Paris, and, choosing a paragraph at random, read what purported to be:

**"Le JEUNE PÊCHEUR, étendu sous le SAULE, appelait le MATIN de tous ses VŒUX, car il lui tardait de reprendre sa TÂCHE."**—[the young fisherman, lying down under the willow tree, was wishing eagerly (calling with all his wishes) for the return of the morning, for he longed to take up his task again.]

But, to her great confusion, her reading brought forth a tremendous peal of laughter, for she had said:

**"Le JAUNE PÊCHEUR, étendu sous le SOL, appelait le MÂTIN, de tous ses VEAUX, car il lui tardait de reprendre sa TACHE,"** which means: the yellow sinner, lying down under the ground, called the mastiff with all his calves, for he longed to take up his stain again. . . .

After the excitement had subsided, the obstinate young lady, determined to make up for her previous blunder, opened the book again and read:

**"Elle BAISA la main de la sœur: LISE, s'écria-t-elle, vous êtes une ROSE!"**—[She kissed the hand of her sister: Lise, she exclaimed, you are a rose!]

This time the audience nearly fainted, for the unfortunate reader had made the author say:

**"Elle BAISSA la main de la sœur: LISSSE, s'écria-t-elle, vous êtes une ROSSE!"**—[she pulled down her sister's hand: Smooth one, she exclaimed, you are an old nag!]

## MISPRONUNCIATION

### OF SOME PROPER NAMES IN FRENCH

**I**T is hardly necessary to say that anybody addicted to the study of French has no excuse for mispronouncing such names as **Paris**, **Marseille**, **Versailles** and so forth. Yet these nouns are constantly murdered by people who pride themselves upon being conversant with French classics—people who can translate “*Les Misérables*” or “*Notre Dame*,” but call the author **Victoh-Iougo**!

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>Paris</b>         | Never sound the final “s.”  |
| <b>Lyon</b>          | There is no reason for making it <b>Lyons</b> and pronouncing <b>la-i-onn-ze</b> [Engl.: <b>li-nnce</b> ], since the names of other French cities keep in English their original spelling. Give the word the French sound: <b>li-on</b> . |
| <b>Marseille</b>     | is not <b>Mâr-sel</b> , but <b>mar-cé-i</b> [Engl.: <b>marr-say-ee</b> ].   |
| <b>Versailles</b>    | Few foreigners pronounce the word correctly. They say generally: <b>veur-sail</b> . The correct sound is <b>ver-sa-i</b> [Engl.: <b>verrs-I</b> ].  |
| <b>Orléans</b>       | Notice the accent and do not give to “ <b>lé</b> ” the English sound of “ <b>lee</b> .” Pronounce the last syllable like the French word <b>an</b> (year).  |
| <b>Fontainebleau</b> | Often pronounced <b>fountain-blue</b> . You must say: <b>fontaine-blô</b> .   |
| <b>Boulogne</b>      | Do not dwell on the middle syllable. The “o” is very short.   |
| <b>Calais</b>        | Pronounce: <b>kah-là</b> .  |
| <b>Genève</b>        | Avoid to call it Geneva and especially to pronounce it: <b>djenn-ee-vah</b> , which often causes this city to be mistaken for Genoa ( <b>djenn-o-ah</b> ), the Italian seaport.   |
| <b>Savoie</b>        | Do not pronounce it: <b>sa-vo-ee</b> , but <b>sa-v’wa</b> [Engl.]   |
| <b>Saint Cloud</b>   | “ <b>Saint</b> ,” without sounding the “t.” “ <b>Cloud</b> ”: <b>cloo</b> .   |
| <b>Saint Denis</b>   | “ <b>Denis</b> ” with the first syllable very short: <b>d’ni</b> [Engl.: <b>d’nee</b> ].  |

- Vevey** A Swiss resort. Pronounce: *ve-vè* [the first "e" like the "u" of nut].
- Buttes Chaumont** A park in Paris. Often mispronounced: *boutte-chomount*. The true pronunciation is *but-chô-mon* [French "u."]
- Champs-Élysées** Some people find it difficult to pronounce the last word. The correct sound is *é-li-zé*.
- Palais Royal** The last word is not: *ro-ial*, but *roi-ial* [Engl.: *r'wa-ial*], for the "y" stands for two "i."
- Saint Eustache** A church in Paris. *Eu* (like the "u" of murder) stashed.
- La Madeleine** Not: *ma-de-linne*, but *mad-laine*.
- Bastille** Is not *bass-til*. The last syllables have the liquid sound, like in "*fil*le," "*bill*," and so forth.
- Porte Maillot**  
[at Paris] Wrongly pronounced *ma-liot* by many foreigners. The correct sound is: *ma-i-o* [Engl.: *my-oh*].
- Charlemagne** This king is much ill-used in English, as far as pronunciation is concerned. He is generally called either: *tshale-maine*, or *tsha-li-mange*. You get an idea of the correct sound by pronouncing the following:  
*sharr*  
*le*—like the French article  
*ma*—like the French possessive  
*ni*—like the French negative  
*e*—scarcely heard.
- Millet** Notwithstanding the rules on liquid sounds, the name of this artist must be pronounced: *mi-let* [Engl.: *me-lay*].
- Louis XIV.** One should come to some understanding about the pronunciation of these two words. Many people say "Louis the Fourteenth," with Louis like in French: *lou-i* [Engl.: *loo-ee*], while others pronounce "Louis Quatorze," sounding Louis like in English.
- Mme. de Maintenon** Often pronounced like the French word for "now" (*maintenant*). This is wrong, for "*an*" and "*on*" have by no means the same sound.
- Marie-Antoinette** Avoid the sound of the English "th" in Antoinette and sound clearly the "oi" (*wa*).
- Robespierre** Do not give to the ending the sound of the English word "*pier*." Pronounce *Ro-bess-pi-err* (with "pi" like in "pigeon.")
- Richelieu** Is not *rich-liou*, but [Engl.] *rish-lee-eu* ["eu" having the sound of "u" in murder."]

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Mme. de Sévigné</b> | is not <i>se-vig-ne</i> but <i>sé-vi-ni-é</i> . Observe the accents.  |
| <b>Molière</b>         | Sometimes wrongly pronounced: <i>mo-year</i> . The correct sound is: <i>mo-li-air</i> [Engl.: <i>mo-lee-air</i> .]  |
| <b>Mme. de Staël</b>   | Is pronounced <i>stal</i> . [French "a"]  |
| <b>Montaigne</b>       | The name of this great philosopher is pronounced <i>montagne</i> .  |
| <b>Montmorency</b>     | Not <i>mount-mo-rin-say</i> , but <i>mon-mo-ren-ci</i> .  |
| <b>Rochefoucauld</b>   | [Engl.] <i>rosh-foo-co</i> .  |
| <b>St. Bernard</b>     | Usually pronounced in English: <i>beur-nad</i> . Say [Engl.] <i>bear-narr</i> .   |
| <b>Abailard</b>        | [Engl.] <i>ah-bay-larr</i> .  |
| <b>Héloïse</b>         | [Engl.] <i>a-lo-iz</i> , "a" like in "baker."   |
| <b>Jeanne d'Arc</b>    | [Engl.] <i>j'ann d'ark</i> , "ann" with a stress on the "a." Never put the "d" portion of the "j" like in English.  |
| <b>St. Saens</b>       | A French composer. Often mispronounced. The correct sound is <i>sens</i> , but it cannot be rendered in English, as nasal sounds are peculiar to the French language. Some Bostonians, however, pronounce the word "aunt" with a twang which gives a remote idea of the French diphthong <i>an</i> (or <i>en</i> ). |
| <b>Alexandre Dumas</b> | Not Alexander, but <i>ah-leks-an-dre</i> , "an" with the nasal sound.   |
| <b>Maréchal Niel</b>   | A well-known French general officer under Napoleon the Third. This noun is better known in America and in England as the name of a species of rose. Often mispronounced: <i>marahal Neel</i> . Pronounce: <i>ma-ré-shal Ni-elle</i> [Engl.: <i>nee-ell</i> ].   |

## EXERCISES

## PART I.

## WORDS SIMILAR IN BOTH LANGUAGES, WITH A DIFFERENT MEANING

## SECTION A

## I

Dear friend:

Since you are going to town, I wish you would rent for me a **large glass cabinet** for my **bric à brac**, and also a bureau with about twenty **pigeonholes** for my **private study**. Have them sent here as soon as possible, through Mr. Durand, who is a **relative** of mine. Also please call at Duval's **store** and buy me:

a **dull brass chandelier** for the hall;  
three china **candlesticks**;  
three dozen **lemons**;  
six **citrons**; five pounds of **lard**;  
three pounds of **bacon**;  
five pounds of **raisins**;  
one basket of **grapes**;  
a box of **pins**;  
a bottle of white **pine syrup**;  
a **file**;  
two **blinds** for the dining-room;  
a **mat** for the doorway;  
a piece of blue **gauze**; and some **tape**.

I think this is about all I need for the present.

(Continued No. 2.)

## 2

I shall send you to-morrow at the **depot** by one of my **servants**, a little bundle containing several things which I want you to take to the hardware **store**: my **opera glass**, which is out of order; also my hunting-knife, the **blade** of which is broken. You will find herewith enclosed on a separate note a few particulars about the dimensions of the **cabinet**, **blinds**, etc. For the rest, as I have the greatest **confidence** in your buying ability, I rely entirely upon you.

I hope this will not trouble you too much. I would have sent to town old Pierre, the coachman, to do the shopping, for he had to

purchase a pair of reins for the horses; but he is busy nursing the bay mare, which has a kind of itch; besides, he suffers from a spleen disease, also from kidney trouble, and I do not want him to go out while this gale is blowing. He is not a sensible fellow and does not take good care of himself; I am afraid that, at the rate he goes, he will rapidly grow worse. I know you are interested in him, that is why I am giving you all these details.

Hoping you will have a pleasant journey, I remain

Yours cordially,

## SECTION B

### 3

Did you see this advertisement in the "Morning Brawler?"—No. What is it about?—About the sale of Mr. John's factory.—Was it a large concern?—Not at all. The building itself is a mere wooden shanty, near the Marine Barracks.—Mr. John is a bad character, is he not?—By no means. He is a very honest man, very gay at times, and always cheerful. But when he was young, he had a bad temper, that is all.—When have you met him?—At the Durands', last winter; he was my partner at whist. Then I went to Europe with him on the same steamer, in fact in the same stateroom.—Is he a good conversationalist?—No. He is not well read in modern literature, for when I asked him what was his opinion of the "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," he answered he had never tried it, although he had used many kinds of breakfast food!—

(Continued No. 4.)

### 4

Who is Mr. John's first clerk?—Mr. Paul.—I thought Paul was a clerk in some attorney's office.—He was in my partner's special office. But we had some difficulties about a patent, and he resigned.—Well, now I think of it, how much had you to pay for that license of mine?—Ninety francs. In France a tradesman's license is proportional to the rent of the building.—Yes, I know. Well, it is the last time I have to pay for it; I will soon retire from business, and live on my income.—I congratulate you. What will you do then?—Get a pretty cottage, a carriage, and have a "jolly" time.—I do not doubt you will keep many servants; you are so fastidious!—I shall get a good housekeeper; it is so tiresome to attend to the many details of housekeeping.—I hope your cook will be more experienced than mine; when I asked Bridget the other day if the butcher had sent the lobsters: "Yes, sir," said she. "But I sent them back; they were not ripe!"

## SECTIONS A AND B

### 5

Arthur, this cook is impossible.—I think that you have a prejudice against colored servants.—You know very well I have no race prejudice.—Well, you would not do any harm to the negro race, but you

hate black people individually.—That cook is worse than the others.—Every cook was, since we began housekeeping. What is the trouble now?—Well, I told her: "There is three months' dust in the kitchen." She placidly retorted: "That is not my fault, madam. I have been here only a fortnight!"—Does that upset you? I would not mind such trifles. You are not a sensible woman. You had better attend to me. I am hungry and thirsty.—Will you have a mutton chop and some claret?—No. I prefer a glass of bier and some cheese. I can get that myself in the kitchen, since you are so sensitive that you cannot bear the sight of that servant.

(Continued No. 6.)

6

Well, Arthur, did you get that glass of bier?—No. I feel no more thirsty. When I entered the kitchen I saw a dirty negro, about one hundred years old, wrapped up in a blanket; he was eating a kind of stewed veal out of a glass, and looked at himself in a broken mirror. The smell and the sight were too much for me and . . . here I am.—Well, I would not mind such a trivial affair, if I were a man. Let me show you this beautiful song. I got the score to-day at Duval's.—What is it called?—"By moonlight."—Oh, I do not want to hear it. It is dreadfully commonplace.—I do not think you know it.—Maybe not, but the very title is vulgar.—Well, what about this.—What is it?—The latest novel.—What is it about?—A man of ignoble extraction who, by dint of energy and enterprise, grows to be a millionaire and a baronet.—How did he make his money?—Selling umbrellas.—That is simply disgusting! Now, if he had been in the cane business, like myself, I could have understood. I cannot see anything in an umbrella.—Well, I do. As a weather forecast.—How is that?—If you take your umbrella along, in the morning, when the weather is threatening, it is a sure sign that it will soon clear off.

## PART II.

## WRONG FRENCH EXPRESSIONS

## 7

[From a man to a woman.]

Dear Friend:

I heard with much sorrow that you were discouraged, and ready to give up your studies. You were right to apply to me and I am quite willing to help you. I have met with an accident the other day, but although I have sprained my wrist, I am able to use my tongue, if not my hand. Let me know if you will be at home to-morrow, and, if agreeable to you, I shall come for you early in the morning. In case you should not be free to-morrow, I can come on Friday; not before, for on Wednesday I have to pay a visit to an old friend of mine; and on Thursday I shall take my sister to a performance which will take place at Versailles. Now, when I think of it, can you not join us that day? Sister would be delighted to call for you on her way to the depot.

Hoping to see you soon, I remain,

Very respectfully yours,

## 8

Dear Jules:

I am very angry at you! How is it that you cannot find the way to leave Paris for a few days? I hoped you would visit me here before going to England; I expected to have a good time with you. Father wanted to introduce you to a friend of his, Mr. Black, who plays chess as well as you do; he plays on the violin, too, tolerably well; and is very enthusiastic about music. Mr. Black's wife plays on the banjo indifferently and sings too much for our comfort; but she is an interesting talker, and you would have enjoyed her conversation very much.

I have heard from Pierre. In a few days he will marry his former tutor's daughter, that black-eyed girl you saw at Mr. Blank's house. This young lady is worth 500,000 francs and has some expectations. In your letter you inquired about my race horses. Well, when I was at the seashore last summer, I sold them to the proprietor of the hotel—a lucky fellow who had saved much money since he is in the business.

That is all I have to say for the present. Remember me\* to your brother when you see him and believe me,

Your friend,

(\*) See Mistakes in Letter Writing, page 56.



[Rewrite this in French after correcting the mistakes.]

Paris, quatrième de juin 1902.

Cher monsieur:

Votre lettre est justement arrivée. Cela me donne très beaucoup de plaisir d'entendre que vous avez eu une bonne journée sur mer. J'ai lu dans le papier du dimanche que le temps est plus et plus mauvais chaque jour sur l'Océan et je craignais que votre bateau ne fût tard. Comment aimez vous l'Amérique? Combien longtemps attendez vous de passer là? Quand vous êtes à Chicago, allez et voyez Mr. Bernard, dont vous avez l'adresse et qui était un de mes pupilles. Il était né à Chicago et sait la ville très bien. Vous n'avez qu'à envoyer pour lui, dès votre arrivée. Il sera enchanté de prendre une promenade avec vous.

Quand à votre affaire, je l'ai terminée. J'ai trouvé un mécanicien pour faire le travail, et on le paiera par l'heure. Vous trouverez dans cette lettre un reçu pour le prix de la fourniture de salon et du fourneau placé dans la cave: la balance de votre compte vous sera d'ailleurs envoyée le mois prochain. Mais j'ai eu du trouble avec la mademoiselle Dubois; je crois qu'elle est une fraude et que je serai obligé de m'appliquer au justice de paix.

Mais il est minuit à ma montre, et j'ai une peine dans la tête: je m'arrête donc et vous prie de croire à mes meilleures amitiés.

[There are thirty mistakes to be found in this exercise.]

## PART III.

## FRENCH IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

[To translate into English orally or in writing.]

## IO

**Comment se fait-il que vous discutiez avec tant d'animation?** Cela n'est pas votre habitude.—**Il s'agit de savoir pourquoi Mr. Durand en veut à Mr. Dubois. A quoi cela tient-il?** Nous ne sommes pas d'accord là dessus.—**Cela tient, je crois, à ce que Mr. Dubois donne maintenant dans le spiritisme. J'étais en train de lire un article qu'il a publié sur ce sujet dans le "Temps."**—**Lui en voulez-vous, vous-même, pour cela?**—**Moi? Non certes. Qu'est-ce que cela me fait? Je me soucie peu de ce que mon prochain fait ou pense. J'ai assez de mes propres affaires.**—**Vous me faites l'effet d'un philosophe très pratique.**—**Mais c'est précisément la philosophie qui nous donne le sens pratique.**—**Et aussi l'indifférence!**—**Oui, l'indifférence, quelquefois. Quant à moi, si mon voisin donne dans une fantaisie qui ne gêne personne, qu'il s'en donne tant qu'il veut, cela ne m'importe pas.**—**Très bien, monsieur le philosophe, je ferai de mon mieux pour vous imiter.**

(Continued No. 11.)

## II

**Il ne s'en faut pas de beaucoup que je ne vous demande des leçons de sens pratique, comme vous l'appellez. Je pourrais former une classe avec ces messieurs, et nous travaillerions à qui mieux mieux pour oublier nos maux, et surtout ceux de nos voisins. Mais je crains d'être un peu âgé pour me mettre à étudier une science si nouvelle.**—**Qu'à cela ne tienne! Mettez vous-y et vous verrez comme cela est facile. Vous, apprendrez vite à vous jouer des difficultés de la logique.**—**Et de celles de la morale?**—**Vous avez beau vous moquer de moi: je sais ce que je dis. Venez me voir tantôt tous ensemble et nous commencerons nos discussions.**—**Nous ne vous gênerons pas? Mais, j'y pense, un grand homme comme vous ne peut être gêné par une chose aussi vulgaire qu'un dérangement! Messieurs, c'est entendu: nous irons cette après midi chez lui. Vous ne sauriez être trop ponctuels, car ce philosophe n'aurait qu'à s'impatience: tout le bénéfice de ses études serait ainsi perdu.**

## PART IV.

## ENGLISH EXPRESSIONS

[To translate into French orally or in writing.]

12

**You have been long dressing; I had been told that you were very quick, but we have been married three months, and I never saw you yet ready in time.—I wish I could be as quick and nimble as you are. However, I do not like you to think that I am always so late at meals. To-day I was delayed down town. I have not been able to come back here before 5:30.—Well, you ought to have started earlier this morning.—I did start early. The trouble is that I took the wrong car, and when I reached Main Street, I rang at the wrong house. After I had found out where my friend, Miss So-and-So, lives, I went there just to learn that she had left for Europe a week ago yesterday. Then I went shopping, for I had to buy so many things.**

(Continued No. 13.)

13

**I suppose you enjoy shopping.—I enjoy the sight of the rush and hustle in the big stores. Well, when I asked what they charged for the kind of smoking-jacket you want, they charged me one hundred francs. Of course I thought it was too dear.—Thank you. Proceed.—But I bought a lovely muff for myself.—How much?—Oh, I do not know. I had it sent to your office, C. O. D.—Indeed! I wonder why you bought a muff when you have already four?—I wonder at your impudence! I had none to match the dress you promised me for my birthday.—Oh, I see. Go on.—It is of no avail. It does not interest you in the least.—Yes, it does; financially.—Later, as it looked like snow, I went to see Mrs. Durand to get an umbrella, but I could not get her to lend me one.**

(Continued No. 14.)

14

**I said to her: would you mind lending me that umbrella of yours with the gilded handle; but she said: I would not mind lending you anything else; you know, loaned umbrellas, like loaned books, often get lost, always get spoiled.—You ought to have reminded her of the three hundred francs I lent to her husband five years ago last spring. I fear they will get lost, too!—Indeed, you do not know how to manage. You ought to . . . do something anyway. Oh, if I were a man, I would attend to that at once. Three hundred francs, what a beautiful hat I could get for that money!—I wish you to understand that I know my business. How did you part with Mrs. Durand?—Well, she did not lend me anything, but finally borrowed five francs from me to pay the gas bill. I forgot it was all the money I had; and after I had taken the car, I perceived that I had not my car-fare. I had to alight and to walk back home.**

## PART VI.

## ADJECTIVES WITH TWO MEANINGS

15

Is Maubeuge an important business centre?—No; it is only a small fortified city. I do not know any big merchant there.—Do you not know Mr. Dupont?—Yes; a very stout and very tall merchant who deals in wines and liquors. Last year, it was the last year of my stay at college in Maubeuge, I met him. He is a good fellow, but he is not a brave man, for I saw him flee before a cow, and jump over a deep ditch, ten feet wide.—Come, now! This is a false story. He could never jump in his life.—I assure you, it is a true story. My deep regard for you prevents me from telling you falsehoods.—Anyway, Dupont is a very nice man.—Yes, he is. He says that he is a nobleman by birth. As for me, I think he looks ill-bred.

(Continued No. 16.)

16

He may look vulgar; but you cannot say that he has a vicious look.—How many brothers has he?—Two. One is a penniless musician, the other a writer without talent.—I remember now that the latter is a lachrymose poet.—An indifferent poet, indeed. I have just read some ill-made verses he had written to Mme. Dubois; they are ill-natured verses, too.—As for the musician, he looks deceitful.—Yes; he resembles slightly Mr. Pierre, our old teacher, who was a very silly fellow.—Mr. Pierre was a kind man.—A simpleton, proud and tiresome.—I do not agree with you. He was kindness itself.—Well, he used to show the same kindness to animals, honorable people and regular blackguards.—You cannot deny that he had been once a famous professor.—An excellent teacher, indeed, who never was able to secure a good situation in this country. He had a vulgar appearance, too, although he pretended that his father was a nobleman.—I used to know his father: a nice man, obliging and generous.—I knew him, too; a ladies' man, but no gentleman, nor a nobleman, either!—Well, I see that you are rather ill-natured to-day. What is the matter?—I had a poor dinner at my aunt's.—Was it a meal without meat?—Of course, and it lasted two tedious hours, in "tête à tête."—I understand your feelings. But as I do not want you to slander any more to-day, we had better bring this conversation to a close.

## KEY TO THE EXERCISES

## I

**Cher ami:**

Puisque vous allez en ville, je désire que vous louiez pour moi une **grande vitrine** pour mes **bibelots** et aussi un bureau avec environ vingt **cases** pour mon **cabinet**. Faites les envoyer ici aussitôt que possible, par l'intermédiaire de Mr. Durand qui est un de mes **parents**. Aussi, s'il vous plait, passez au **magasin** de Duval et achetez moi:

un lustre de bronze **mat** pour le vestibule;  
trois **chandeliers** de porcelaine;  
trois douzaines de **citrons**;  
six **cédrats**; cinq livres de **saindoux**;  
trois livres de **lard**;  
cinq livres de **raisins secs**;  
un panier de **raisins**;  
une boîte d'**épingles**;  
une bouteille de sirop de **pin blanc**; une **lime**;  
deux **stores** pour la salle à manger;  
une **natte** pour la porte d'entrée;  
un morceau de **gaze** bleue et du **galon**;

Je pense que c'est à peu près tout ce dont j'ai besoin pour le moment.

## 2

Je vous enverrai demain à la **gare** par un de mes **domestiques**, un petit paquet contenant plusieurs choses que je désire que vous portiez au **magasin** de quincaillerie; ma **lorgnette** qui est dérangée; aussi mon couteau de chasse, dont la **lame** est cassée. Vous trouverez ci-inclus, sur une note séparée, quelques détails sur les dimensions de la **vitrine**, des **stores**, etc. Pour le reste, comme j'ai la plus grande **confiance** dans votre talent d'acheteur, je m'en rapporte entièrement à vous.

J'espère que ceci ne vous dérangera pas trop. J'aurais envoyé en ville le vieux Pierre, le cocher, pour faire les emplettes, car il avait à acheter une paire de **rènes** pour les chevaux; mais il est occupé à soigner la **jument** baie qui a une sorte de **gale**; d'ailleurs il souffre d'une maladie de **foie**, aussi d'un mal de **reins**; et je ne veux pas qu'il sorte tant que souffle cette **tempête**. Ce n'est pas un garçon **sensé** et il ne prend pas soin de lui même; j'ai peur qu'au **train** dont il va, son état n'empire rapidement. Je sais que vous lui portez de l'intérêt, c'est pourquoi je vous donne tous ces détails.

Espérant que vous aurez un agréable voyage, je reste votre très dévoué.

## 3

Avez vous vu cette **annonce** dans le "Brillard du Matin?"—Non. De quoi s'agit-il?—De la vente de la **manufacture** de Mr. Jean.—Était-ce un établissement considérable?—Pas du tout. Le bâtiment lui-même est une simple **baraque**, près des **casernes** de la Marine.—Mr. Jean a une **mauvaise réputation**, n'est-ce pas?—Pas le moins du monde. C'est un très honnête homme, très **bon vivant** par moments, et toujours **gai**. Mais, quand il était jeune, il avait **mauvais caractère**, c'est tout.—Quand l'avez-vous rencontré?—Chez les Durand, l'hiver dernier; il était mon **partenaire** au whist. Puis je suis allé en Europe avec lui sur le même bateau, en fait dans la même **cabine**.—Est-ce un causeur agréable?—Non. Il n'est pas au courant de la littérature moderne, car lorsque je lui ai demandé quelle était son opinion sur "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," il m'a répondu qu'il n'avait jamais essayé cela, quoiqu'il eut employé bien des espèces de "breakfast food!"

## 4

Qui est le premier **commis** de Mr. Jean?—Mr. Paul.—Je pensais que Paul était **clerc de notaire**.—Il était dans le bureau privé de mon **associé**. Mais nous avons eu des différends au sujet d'un **brevêt d'invention** et il a résilié ses fonctions.—Eh bien, quand j'y pense, combien avez vous eu à payer pour ma **patente**?—Quatre vingt dix francs. En France, la **patente** d'un marchand est proportionnelle au **loyer** du bâtiment.—Oui, je le sais. Eh bien, c'est la dernière fois que j'ai à la payer, je me retirerai des affaires bientôt et vivrai de mes **rentes**.—Je vous fais mon compliment. Que ferez-vous alors?—Je me procurerai un **joli cottage**, une voiture et j'aurai **du bon temps** [je passerai une existence très **gaie**].—Je ne doute pas que vous n'ayez plusieurs domestiques; vous êtes si **difficile à plaire**!—Je me procurerai une bonne femme de ménage; c'est si **fastidieux** de s'occuper des petits détails du ménage.—J'espère que votre cuisinière sera plus expérimentée que la mienne; quand j'ai demandé à Brigitte l'autre jour si le boucher avait envoyé les homards: "Oui, monsieur, dit-elle. Mais je les ai renvoyés; ils n'étaient pas mûrs!"

## 5

Arthur, cette cuisinière est impossible.—Je pense que vous avez un **préjugé** contre les **domestiques** de couleur.—Vous savez très bien que je n'ai pas de **préjugé** de race.—Eh bien, vous ne voudriez pas porter **préjudice** à la race nègre, mais vous haïssez les noirs individuellement.—Cette cuisinière est pire que les autres.—Chaque cuisinière l'a été depuis que nous sommes entrés en ménage. De quoi s'agit il maintenant?—Eh bien, je lui ai dit: "Il y a trois mois de poussière dans la cuisine." Elle m'a répondu tranquillement: "Cela n'est pas ma faute, madame. Il y a seulement quinze jours que je suis ici!"—Est-ce que cela vous bouleverse? Je ne ferais pas attention à de telles bagatelles. Vous n'êtes pas une femme **sensée**. Vous feriez mieux de vous occuper de moi. J'ai faim et soif.—Voulez vous une **côtelette** de mouton et du bordeaux?—Non, je préfère un **verre de bière** et du fromage. Je peux me procurer cela moi même dans la cuisine, puisque vous êtes si **sensible** que vous ne pouvez pas supporter la vue de cette domestique.

## 6

Eh bien, Arthur, avez vous pris ce verre de bière?—No. Je n'ai plus soif. Quand je suis entré dans la cuisine, j'ai vu un **sale nègre**, âgé d'environ cent ans, enveloppé dans une **couverture**; il mangeait une espèce de **blanquette** dans un **verre**, et se regardait dans une **glace cassée**. L'odeur et le spectacle ont été trop forts pour moi et . . . me voici.—Eh bien, je ne ferais pas attention à une affaire aussi **insignifiante**, si j'étais un homme. Laissez moi vous montrer cette belle **romance**. Je m'en suis procuré la **partition** aujourd'hui chez Duval.—Comment cela s'appelle-t-il?—“Au Clair de Lune.”—Oh, je ne désire pas l'entendre. C'est terriblement **trivial**.—Je ne pense pas que vous la connaissiez.—Peut être que non, mais le titre même est vulgaire.—Eh bien, que dites vous de ceci?—Qu'est-ce que c'est?—Le dernier **roman**.—De quoi traite-t-il?—D'un homme d'**humble** naissance qui, à force d'énergie et d'esprit d'entreprise parvient à être **millionnaire** et **baronet**.—Comment a-t-il fait sa fortune?—En vendant des **parapluies**.—C'est simplement **ignoble**! Par exemple, s'il avait été dans le commerce des **cannes**, comme moi, j'aurais pu comprendre. Je ne puis rien voir d'intéressant dans un **parapluie**.—Moi, j'y vois quelque chose, comme **présage** du temps.—Comment cela?—Si vous prenez votre **parapluie** avec vous, le matin, quand le temps menace, c'est un signe sûr que le temps va bientôt s'éclaircir.

## 7

Chère amie:

J'ai entendu dire, avec beaucoup de chagrin, que vous étiez **découragée** et prête à abandonner vos études. Vous avez eu raison de vous adresser à moi, et je suis très disposé à vous aider. Il m'est arrivé un accident l'autre jour; mais quoique je me sois **foulé le poignet**, je suis capable de **me servir** de la langue, si non de la main. Faites moi savoir si vous serez chez vous demain; et, si cela vous est **agréable**, je viendrai vous chercher de bonne heure le matin. Au cas où vous ne seriez pas libre le matin, je puis venir **vendredi**; pas avant, car, **mercredi**, j'ai à **faire une visite** à un de mes vieux amis; et **jeudi**, j'**emmènerai** ma sœur à une **représentation** qui a lieu à Versailles. Maintenant, quand j'y pense, ne pouvez vous pas vous joindre à nous ce jour-là? Ma sœur serait charmée de **passer** chez vous en allant à la gare.

Espérant vous voir bientôt,

Je reste  
votre très respectueusement dévoué.

## 8

Cher Jules:

Je suis très **fâché** contre vous! Comment se fait-il que vous ne puissiez pas **trouver le moyen** de quitter Paris pendant quelques jours? J'espérais que vous me feriez une visite ici **avant d'aller** en Angleterre. Je comptais m'**amuser beaucoup** avec vous. Mon père désirait vous présenter à un de ses amis, Mr. Black, qui joue aux échecs aussi bien que vous; il joue du violon aussi, **passablement**; et il est très **enthousiaste** en fait de musique. La femme de Mr. Black joue du banjo

médiocrement et chante trop pour notre confort; mais elle cause d'une façon intéressante, et vous auriez joui beaucoup de sa conversation.

J'ai reçu des nouvelles de Pierre. Dans quelques jours, il épousera la fille de son ancien précepteur, cette jeune personne aux yeux noirs que vous avez vue chez Mr. Blank. Cette jeune demoiselle est riche de 500,000 francs et a des espérances.

Dans votre lettre vous m'avez demandé des nouvelles de mes chevaux de course. Eh bien, quand j'étais au bord de la mer l'été dernier, je les ai vendus au propriétaire de l'hôtel (or au maître de l'hôtel), un heureux gaillard qui a gagné beaucoup d'argent depuis qu'il est dans les affaires.

C'est là tout ce que j'ai à dire pour le moment. Rappelez moi au souvenir de votre frère quand vous le verrez, et croyez moi.

Votre ami.

9

Paris, quatre juin 1902

Cher monsieur:

Votre lettre vient d'arriver. Cela me fait beaucoup de plaisir d'apprendre que vous avez eu un bon voyage sur mer. J'ai lu dans le journal du dimanche que le temps est de plus en plus mauvais chaque jour sur l'Océan; et je craignais que votre bateau ne fût en retard. Comment trouvez-vous l'Amérique? Combien de temps comptez vous passer là?

Quand vous serez à Chicago, allez voir Mr. Bernard, dont vous avez l'adresse et qui était un de mes élèves. Il est né à Chicago et connaît la ville très bien. Vous n'avez qu'à l'envoyer chercher, dès votre arrivée. Il sera enchanté de faire une promenade avec vous.

Quant à votre affaire, je l'ai terminée. J'ai trouvé un artisan pour faire le travail; et on le paiera à l'heure. Vous trouverez dans cette lettre un reçu pour le prix du mobilier de salon, et du calorifère placé dans la cave: le solde de votre compte vous sera d'ailleurs envoyé le mois prochain. Mais j'ai eu des difficultés avec mademoiselle Dubois; je crois qu'elle est un imposteur et que je serai obligé de m'adresser au juge de paix.

Mais il est minuit à ma montre et j'ai mal à la tête; je m'arrête donc et vous prie de croire à mes meilleures amitiés.

10

How is it that you are discussing with such animation? It is not your custom.—The question is to know why Mr. Durand has a grudge against Mr. Dubois. What is the cause of it? We do not agree on that point.—That comes, I believe, from the fact that Mr. Dubois indulges now in spiritualist studies. I was just reading a paper which he wrote on that subject in the "Times."—Do you bear him a grudge yourself on that account?—I? No, indeed. What is that to me? I do not care for what my neighbor does or thinks. I have enough with my own affairs.—In my opinion, you look like a very practical philosopher.—Indeed, it is philosophy itself which gives us practical sense.—And also indifference!—Yes, "unconcern," sometimes. As



for me, if my neighbor has a hobby which inconveniences no one, let him give himself up to it! That does not concern me.—Very good, Mr. Philosopher. I shall do my best to imitate you.

## II

I feel very much like asking you to give me lessons in practical sense, as you call it. I could form a class with these gentlemen and we should strive with each other in trying to forget our pains, and above all, those of our neighbors. But, I fear, I am a little old to set myself to study so new a science.—Never mind that! Set about it and you will see how easy it is. You will learn quickly to overcome the difficulties of logic.—As well as those of morals?—It is in vain for you to make fun of me; I know what I am talking about. Come to see me this afternoon all together and we shall begin our discussion.—Shall we not inconvenience you? Now, when I think of it, a great man like you cannot be inconvenienced by as vulgar a thing as a disturbance! Gentlemen, it is understood; we shall go this afternoon to his house. You could not be too punctual, for suppose this philosopher gets impatient; all the benefit of his studies would thus be lost.

## 12

**Vous avez mis du temps à vous habiller; on m'avait dit que vous étiez très leste, mais il y a trois mois que nous sommes mariés, et je ne vous ai encore jamais vue prête à l'heure.—Je voudrais pouvoir être aussi leste et agile que vous. Cependant je n'aime pas que vous pensiez que je suis toujours si en retard pour les repas. Aujourd'hui j'ai été retardée en bas de la ville. Je n'ai pas pu revenir ici avant 5 h. 30.—Eh bien, vous auriez dû partir plus tôt ce matin.—Mais je suis partie de bonne heure. Le malheur est que je me suis trompée de tramway, et quand j'ai atteint Main Street, je me suis trompée de porte en sonnant. Après avoir découvert où mon amie, Mme. Une Telle, demeure, je suis allée là juste pour apprendre qu'elle était partie pour l'Europe, il y a eu hier huit jours. Ensuite, j'ai été faire des emplettes, car j'avais à acheter tant de choses.**

## 13

Je suppose que vous aimez à faire des emplettes.—Je jouis de la presse et du mouvement dans les grands magasins. Donc, quand j'ai demandé ce qu'on prenait pour l'espèce de coin de feu que vous désirez, on m'a demandé cent francs. Bien entendu, j'ai pensé que c'était trop cher.—Merci. Continuez.—Mais je me suis acheté un ravissant manchon.—Combien coûte-t-il?—Oh! je n'en sais rien. Je l'ai fait envoyer à votre bureau, payable à domicile.—Vraiment! Je me demande pourquoi vous avez acheté un manchon quand vous en avez déjà quatre?—Je m'étonne de votre impudence! Je n'en avais pas pour assortir la robe que vous m'avez promise pour mon jour de naissance.—Oh, je vois. Continuez.—Cela ne sert à rien. Cela ne vous intéresse en aucune façon.—Si, cela m'intéresse: financièrement.—Plus tard, comme on aurait dit qu'il allait neiger, je suis allée voir Mme. Durand pour me procurer un parapluie, mais je n'ai pu l'amener à m'en prêter un.

## 14

Je lui ai dit: **voudriez vous bien me prêter votre parapluie au manche doré**; mais elle dit: **je vous prêterais volontiers n'importe quelle autre chose: vous savez, les parapluies prêtés, comme les livres prêtés, "souvent se perdent et toujours s'abîment."**—**Vous auriez dû lui rappeler les trois cents francs que j'ai prêté à son mari il y a eu cinq ans au printemps dernier: j'ai peur qu'ils ne se perdent aussi!**—**Veritablement vous ne savez pas vous arranger.** Vous devriez faire quelque chose en tout cas. Oh, si j'étais un homme, je **m'occuperais de cela** tout de suite. Trois cents francs, quel beau chapeau je pourrais acheter pour cet argent!—**Je désire que vous compreniez que je connais mon affaire.** Comment avez vous quitté Mme. Durand?—Eh bien, elle ne m'a rien prêté, mais finalement elle m'a emprunté cinq francs pour payer la note du gaz. J'ai oublié que c'était tout l'argent que j'avais sur moi; et, **après avoir pris le tramway, je me suis aperçu que je n'avais pas de quoi payer ma place.** J'ai dû descendre et rentrer à pied à la maison.

## 15

Est-ce que Maubeuge est une importante place de commerce?—Non, c'est seulement une petite place forte; je n'y connais aucun fort marchand.—Ne connaissez vous pas Mr. Dupont?—Si, un marchand très fort et très grand qui est dans les vins et liqueurs. L'année dernière, c'était la dernière année de mon séjour au collège à Maubeuge, je l'ai rencontré. C'est un brave garçon, mais ce n'est pas un homme brave, car je l'ai vu fuir devant une vache et sauter un fossé profond, de dix pieds de large.—Allons donc! C'est là une vraie histoire. Il n'a jamais pu sauter dans sa vie.—Je vous assure, c'est une histoire vraie. Ma profonde considération pour vous m'empêche de vous dire des mensonges.—En tout cas, Dupont est un homme très gentil.—Oui. Il dit qu'il est gentilhomme de naissance. Quant à moi je pense qu'il a mauvais air.

## 16

Il peut avoir l'air commun; mais vous ne pouvez pas dire qu'il a l'air mauvais.—Combien de frères a-t-il?—Deux. L'un est un musicien pauvre, l'autre un pauvre écrivain.—Je me rappelle maintenant que ce dernier est un poète triste.—Un triste poète, vraiment. Je viens de lire quelques méchants vers qu'il avait écrit à Mme. Dubois; ce sont des vers méchants, aussi.—Quant au musicien, il a l'air faux.—Oui, il a un faux air de Mr. Pierre, notre vieux maître qui était un fier imbécile.—Mr. Pierre était un homme bon.—Un bonhomme fier et ennuyeux.—Je ne suis pas de votre avis. Il était la bonté même.—Certes, il témoignait la même bonté pour les animaux, les honnêtes gens et les francs goujats.—Vous ne pouvez pas nier qu'il ait été une fois un professeur fameux.—Un fameux professeur vraiment, qui n'a jamais été capable de se procurer une bonne situation dans ce pays. Il avait mauvais air aussi, quoiqu'il prétendît que son père était gentilhomme.—Je connaissais son père: un homme

**gentil**, obligeant et généreux.—Je le connais aussi: **un homme galant**, mais pas un **galant homme**, ni un **gentilhomme**!—Bon, je vois que vous êtes un peu méchant aujourd'hui. Qu'y a-t-il?—J'ai fait un **maigre dîner** chez ma tante.—Était-ce un **dîner maigre**?—Naturellement. Et il a duré deux **mortelles heures**, en tête à tête.—Je comprends vos sentiments. Mais comme je ne veux pas que vous **médisiez** d'avantage aujourd'hui, nous ferions mieux de clore cette conversation.





